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ALFIO BALZANI;

OR,

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY

OF A

PROSCRIBED SICILIAN.



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J. Minelli



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RUDD & CARLETON, 130 GRAND STREET.

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ALFIO BALZANI

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EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY

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NEW YORK  
RUDD & CARLETON, 130 GRAND STREET.  
RECEIVED



TO  
GENERAL GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI;

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF THE MANY HAPPY DAYS PASSED WITH HIM,

WHILE A RESIDENT OF CLIFTON, STATEN ISLAND,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY THE AUTHOR.







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## P R E F A C E .

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THE idea of writing, in the English language, for publication, an autobiography, had never crossed my mind until several of my American friends, who had occasionally heard me narrate some of the stirring incidents of my life, requested me to do so. At first I remonstrated, and plead my slight knowledge of the language as a sufficient reason for declining. My friends remarked, however, that their countrymen desired to become acquainted with the life, character and customs of the Italians of Sicily ; and, that I might impart to them a knowledge of these matters by a simple detail of my own experience.

Still, this would not have been to me a sufficient inducement to undertake such a work, were it not that the most sensitive chord of my heart had been touched by constantly hearing and reading of calumnious words and sarcasms uttered and written against my countrymen. This had added to the pains and sufferings of my exile, especially as I knew them to be unjust, and that my nation deserved praise and sympathy instead.

Therefore it was, with the hope of disabusing the minds of Americans from thinking evil of us, and enlisting their kindly feelings for my native land, that I undertook the present work. This hope has enabled me



to overcome the diffidence I felt to writing in a language comparatively unfamiliar to me.

Hence I do not present this book as a literary effort ; but, simply as a true history of events, and I trust to the indulgence of American readers to shield it from criticism.

My life, with the incidents connected with it, is, in these pages, so faithfully portrayed as to be easily recognised by those Italians who were actors in, or cognisant of, the events herein narrated. All the personages introduced are as real as the facts related, and most of them are still living ; but I have, from motives of delicacy, changed their names, except in the case of those patriots who gloriously died, and others who gave me permission to use their names if I desired.

As the greater part of this diary was written before the Great Hero, GARIBALDI, had gone to liberate Sicily, I disguised the position of some places, which were the scenes of conspiracy, so that the police might not obtain any clue, through this work, of the persons who are described as actors therein.



# ALFIO BALZANI.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MY PARENTS.

My father was a doctor of medicine and the son of a physician of great eminence. His father's reputation and his own approved skill placed him at the head of his profession, in the city of Palermo, the capital of Sicily. At an early age he married a merchant's daughter, distinguished for beauty and intelligence, and this lady became my mother. They had four boys, (I being the eldest) and a daughter.

Their union was a happy one. They seemed not like husband and wife of several years' standing, but like two lovers who always studied to please each other. Their paramount thoughts were the training and educating of their children. They instructed them in the mysteries of the Catholic church. But the best teaching came to the little ones from the living example of their parents.

My mother always reproved my boyish errors with a sweetness peculiarly her own. When I wondered at the wickedness of other boys, or gossipped about the affairs of others, she was wont to say, "You would not like it if some one spoke against



you—would you ? Then you must not do unto others, what you do not like to have done to you.” She forbade me telling anything unasked, but when questioned I had to answer with frankness, truthfulness and unreserve. Woe to me if I tried to palliate an error.

Parents generally inculcate truthfulness in their children, but they forget or know not that children, on account of their natural thirst for knowledge, observe and hear every thing ; even those trifles which ordinarily pass unnoticed by adults. The mammas and papas in relating in the presence of children things which the latter happened to see, often disguise the truth through policy, or prudence. The innocent creatures, perceiving the difference between the rule and the practice, conclude that they may tell a story, only they must know how to tell it. I never witnessed such an example at home. Never heard any of those expletives, used by people after they have told something in order to affirm or corroborate their words. My mother was a woman of the sweetest temper. All her teachings were by reasoning.

My father by education belonged to the old school. He was always stern and severe to excess. I do not recollect a caress or a kiss from my father. He always kept me at a distance, and I never felt at ease in his presence. In society, on the contrary, so far as the dignity of a very well bred man permitted, he was a merry companion, full of amiability, and loved both by high and low. He was a man of noble mien. His cheerful and sympathizing presence was worth to the patient more than drugs.

My mother was pained by his severity to the children, but never showed it to us by the least opposition. She related to me in after times that one evening before retiring she went into the nursery, and caught my father kissing me with a radiant, loving face. He was wont to go every night to look after our comfort.



Another time she told me that my father, after having given me a severe whipping, had been sleepless an entire night and sick the next day.

I repudiate such a system. Parents must be both indulgent and severe at times. Children must be caressed when they are good, and treated vigorously when bad ; so that they may experience justice and not tyranny from their parents. In forming thus an idea of right and wrong, of goodness and justice, they learn to love and at the same time venerate their parents.

However, the severity of my father was beneficial to me. I had all my mother's tenderness of heart ; but I was naturally impulsive, ardent, fearless and resolute. Therefore, my father's severity was useful in curbing my temper, and causing me to acquire early the habit of self control. I was rather precocious ; on which account my father loaded me with studies, and I accomplished wonders. But, alas ! Precocity, far from being an evidence of uncommon genius, generally, with growing years, fades into mediocrity—thus it was with me !

I have always through my life, had reason to bless my father for his severity. If he had not checked my temper, and habituated me to reflect and moderate my impulses, into how many calamities should I have been plunged ; having been left so early, without a guide in the world, and in the stormy life that mine has proved to be !

I do not intend to relate here, all the wonders that an intelligent and energetic child can perform. I leave it to fond papas and mammas to make such narrations to yawning auditors



## CHAPTER II.

### CARBONARI.

BEFORE narrating the appalling circumstances of my father's life, I deem it necessary to give a glance at that secret society which stirred all Italy, and which has a direct connection with the following chapters.

The eruption of the French revolutionary volcano shook all Europe. That monstrous crater poured its lava even into Italy, down to the straits of Messina, and its thunder-bolts crippled some, and crushed other, old, rickety thrones.

The Italians awoke ; shook from their limbs the torpor of centuries ; hailed the French as liberators, and constituted themselves into several republics.

The tricolor flags of those newly-formed governments announced the dawn of a new era of regeneration, and all minds were busy in evoking old traditional liberties, and in renovating them by the light of civilization, and modern progress.

But, alas ! How easily is human nature deceived ! They did not call to mind the old saying that man does nothing for nothing. And if they did, their natural trustfulness forbade them, in those moments of enthusiasm, to apply that old maxim to their present case.

And, indeed, as nations are composed of men, so they partake collectively, all the good and bad qualities of men.

So the French descended the Alps with the flag of brotherhood unfurled, and proclaiming the noble and disinterested purpose of freeing mankind. They brought to Italy good laws



and wise institutions, which sensibly bettered the civil position of the peninsula. But when the leaders of these different Italian republics were pondering upon a system of confederation they were doomed to discover all at once, the fatal disappointment of their hasty joy, by seeing their republics converted into kingdoms tributary to France, and in their liberators a host of foreign conquerors. Soon, but too late, they called to their minds the old adage, and perceived that a people must acquire its freedom with the blood of its own children, and that to call in the aid of the stranger is but to exchange its native master for a foreign one.

So the political atmosphere instead of being purified, was darkened with foreign tyranny and military license.

As the youth of Italy, whose valor was not easily curbed, might prove dangerous to the invaders, the French enticed them under the glamour of glory, to enlist in their armies. They fought like undegenerate sons of their forefathers; they conquered—but did they take arms in behalf of their country? No! Whilst Italy was oppressed by the French, Italian blood was shed in foreign lands for the benefit of an ambitious usurper. Neither did their prowess give glory to Italy. Their regiments bore no distinguishing name, but were unnumbered and confounded with the French army! How many glorious achievements, performed singly by Italian regiments, were recorded in history as striking exhibitions of French prowess! Even this soothing sentiment of valor and renown was denied to the fond parents, whose children had bravely fallen, leaving their bones to bleach in foreign lands!

At this epoch many patriots of Naples, flying from the persecution of King Murat, had found shelter in the almost impenetrable forests of the Abruzzi. Two ways presented by which to support their miserable existence in the wilderness: to join the powerful band of Banditti; or to employ themselves at the low and laborious work of charcoal-making. They of course



chose the latter. But even the seeking of this ignoble employment had its dangers. If discovered in their retreat, they might have been hunted down as Banditti. Banditti is the name kings have always bestowed upon political refugees!

There lived at this time in Coseuza a young man by the name of Capobianco. His main income came to him from an extensive manufacture of charcoal, from the vast forests he possessed. Knowing him to be a patriot, the refugees applied to him for work. Capobianco accepted their services, and promising secrecy, conveyed them to the woods and caverns.

This noble-hearted young man, who had hailed the French warriors as the liberators of Italy, perceived that the people had in reality acquired nothing but a change of masters. The higher his hopes for the country, so much the deeper the despondency into which he fell. Thereupon his residence in the city became rare, and he passed most of his days in the woods, the freedom and solitude of which were more congenial to his principles, and most soothing to his sadness. After giving a few instructions to his men every morning, he went into the thickest part of the forest, there to repine over the misery of his native land, and to study some means to liberate it. He loathed to remain quietly in shameful bondage.

After long days of musing, he conceived the plan of organizing a secret society, to serve, if for nothing else, as a check and a counter-balance to the invaders. This idea was suggested to his mind by the different secret societies, existing at that epoch in Germany under other denominations. It was an evening in the spring of the year 1810, that assembling all his workmen into one of the large grottos on the sea-shore, used as a depot, where sales were made to the boats engaged in the traffic, he explained to the assemblage, the most of which were intelligent and educated men, the object he had in view. Their response was not short of his expectation. All swore to execute his plan.



It was established in that first re-union that the society should be called the *Carbonari* Charcoal-makers, and their places of meeting *Vendite*, from the place where they had met the *Grotta della vendita* or sales grotto.

In order not to excite suspicion in the authorities they avoided the mistrusted term *brother* and called each other *Buon cugino*—good cousin.

The emblems of the society were the tools of their trade, in a diminutive shape—the saw, axe and spade. Each member was bound to help any other one in want and to defend him, even by the shedding of his own blood. Therefore every Carbonaro was obliged to carry a stiletto of a peculiar form. Grips and conventional words were adopted by which every Good Cousin might be recognized.

Blind obedience to the execution of superior orders was strictly enjoined. An oath, terrible in its character, was required from every Carbonaro, accompanied by appalling ceremonies—which were in accordance with the feelings of the time and the dreadful situation in which they were placed.

The general aim of the society was justice, order and the improvement of mankind. Their aspiration was a well-regulated constitutional government. In those times this was thought the best governmental system.

Capobianco closed the meeting with the words :

“ My Good Cousins, our society is born to-night in the same place where the tyrant Alaric, King of the Visigoth, breathed his last. May our work, under these auspices, be of benefit to mankind, and of especial advantage to our country.”

The dislike of the Italians for the French caused a rapid spread of the society, from Etna to the Alps ; and after the fall of Napoleon it passed into France. It numbered already thousands in every class of society. Amongst the mechanics, into the midst of the nobility, of the clergy, and even into the very Cabinet of the King had the Carbonari penetrated. The name of Capobianco was uttered with veneration and awe.



King Murat was panic-stricken at the imposing aspect of this Society, and tried to gain favor with it. But the minds of the Italians and the Carbonari in particular, grew every day more and more hostile to the French. Their scornful demeanor, their depredations, their spoliation of the *Monti di 'Pieta'*\* and of the master-pieces of painting and sculpture were deemed insufferable. The cruelties of Murat,† who, when opposed, assumed the harsh demeanor of the conqueror, brought the hatred of the Carbonari for the French to the culminating point.

The fortune of Napoleon had already begun to wane, and attacks of terror seized upon Murat. Moments of extremity are the touchstone of character. Instead of trying to conciliate a people naturally docile, and throwing all his resources into the scale of the man who had made him; Judas-like, he betrayed Napoleon, and, on the other hand, completed the alienation of the people, by an act of the greatest atrocity. So predominant in him were the instincts of cruelty.

Capobianco was generally known as the inaugurator, the leader and the the soul of the Carbonari.

The society must be awe-stricken, appalled, discouraged, by a tremendous and unsuspected blow aimed at their head. Capobianco must die in a dreadful manner. Thus resolved the court of Murat.

But the chief of Carbonari was not an ambitious man; therefore he did not give his enemies the opportunity of catching him in a snare. Instead of profiting by his political position, asking offices, or intriguing in court, he adhered to his old quiet life in Coseuza, looking after his estate, and manufacturing charcoal. Nevertheless his doom was sealed: Murat had need of his blood, and his blood must flow!

General Mahnes was at that time (1813), the commandant of

\* Charitable institutions, where the poor pawn their valuables with safety, and at the interest of, from two to three per cent. per annum.

† Colletta—History of Naples.



the French troops in Calabria. One day he invited Capobianco, with whom he was on friendly terms, to a dinner party in Coseuza. The noble, unsuspecting youth, accepted the invitation. When dinner was over, the general invited his guest to an entertainment out of doors.

On leaving the house they found the cannon planted in the streets, and soldiers drawn up in lines in the square. There Capobianco, the noble chief of Carbonari, without a moment's warning was seized and shot.

This atrocious act of King Murat surrounded the Carbonari with the halo of martyrdom, and at the same time led them to stain the purity of their cause by deeds whose only defence is to be found in the laws of self-preservation.

Ferdinand, king of Naples, had found refuge in Sicily. English vessels guarded the ports of the island; English influence spread over the land, and English gold poured among the poorer classes, as water from a broken dyke. To secure that important position they spared no means to gain the popular favor. And the people—the people, of course, felt happy! How could they feel otherwise! Money was so plentiful! The English soldiers in Palermo, amply supplied with cash, and paying, nay throwing dollars away for things worth about a farthing—Hurrah for the generosity of the English! exclaimed fruit sellers, cobblers, tailors and tavern keepers. The king made his son Vicar-General of the Island, and retired to his farm—*La Favorita*—five miles north of the city, there to mingle familiarly like a good father with his subjects; petting and caressing all the peasant girls, whom nature had been so kind as to make deserving of the caresses of the fatherly king. “Behold,” shouted the priests from the pulpit, “Behold a second David! The anointed king, the great Ferdinand, scorning all earthly grandeur, and mixing in familiar intercourse with the lowliest! How moving it is to behold those sacred hands employed in milking and churning, and the most noble of the land helping him!”



The Italians of Sicily, though the majority are uneducated, are docile, faithful, hospitable and enthusiastic. All that they heard, saw, and felt was sufficient to make them enlist for life and death in the cause of their ruler. In fact, several times the French tried to disembark in Messina, and as often were repulsed with great loss, by Sicilian valor. But the educated class were not so easily influenced by appearances. To cajole them, a constitution was granted, modelled after the English. Thus everybody was happy. Oh how easily mankind is deceived!

Lord Bentinck, plenipotentiary of Great Britain, under whose influence the constitution had been planned, promised in the name of his country to protect it from encroachment, and to maintain it, even against king Ferdinand himself. Many copies of this constitution were sent to the Carbonari at Naples, with promises, from both the king and Bentinck, to extend it to the Neapolitans when the king should be reinstated. To give more credit to his promise, Ferdinand asked and obtained initiation as a Carbonaro. The Society would not have trusted him, but the promise being enforced by the word of honor of the English nation, to mistrust was out of the question. Thus they sided and made alliance with king Ferdinand. Besides they were so weary of foreign tyranny, that any change was preferable, even to taking back their old masters.

The queen, Maria Carolina, daughter of the ambitious Maria Theresa, of Austria, hated the English, and secretly favored the French invasion. But she reaped exile and death for the evil deeds she had sown.

In the year 1815 Murat fell, and Ferdinand returned to Naples. The constitution of Sicily was abolished by a stroke of the pen, and the Carbonari hunted down. The Sicilians, who for ten years had fed fifty thousand Neapolitan exiles, and upheld the throne with their lives, perceived themselves at once stripped, not only of the constitution, but even of those



franchises and privileges which they had for centuries enjoyed.

The English government did not trouble itself about the dishonor of the English nation, for the non-fulfillment of a plighted word. The safety-valve oftentimes resorted to, to relieve the prejudice of popular indignation for the disgrace inflicted on that noble country by its rulers, was used at that time.—They changed the Ministry.

Those who desire to know the enormous cruelties committed at that epoch, may read the history written by *Colletta*, a General of king Ferdinand's army.

In the year 1820 the Carbonari were formidable in Sicily. A revolution broke out in Sicily which was victorious throughout the land. The frightened king granted a mock constitution to Naples, and sent a large army, commanded by General Floristano Pepe, as his *Alter Ego*, to reconquer the island. At the gates of Palermo this host found their tomb. The English minister interposed. A treaty was concluded between General Pepe and the leaders of the revolution on board of an English man-of-war. The English Consul was present as a representative of his country, to witness the transaction and to guarantee its fulfillment.

It was agreed that the people should lay down their arms; that the constitution of 1812 should be put once more in full force, and a general amnesty granted for political offences. On the part of the people the treaty was conscientiously fulfilled; but the king tore the contract into fragments. The noble and brave General Pepe could not endure the dishonor, and indignantly throwing up his commission, went into voluntary exile. This infuriated the Bourbon the more in his cruelty—and the English this time scolded him.—That was all!

A year passed, and the Carbonari of all Italy, headed by the prince of Carignano, threatened a general movement. The



organization was formidable. The best men of every city and town were at the head of it.

It was at this time that Victor Emmanuel, king of Piedmont—an honest tyrant—perceiving that he had not sufficient strength to check a revolution excited by the Carbonari throughout his kingdom, and not being willing to grant a constitution, or to contaminate himself with a perjury, abdicated his crown. The chief of Carbonari was then elected regent of the kingdom. (In after years he was created king, taking the name of Carlo Alberto.) The Carbonari hailed his appointment, and called on him to assume the cause of Italy. Deluded men! They did not know that the words honor, faith, love, sympathy, are not found in the vocabulary of kings!

In the dominions of the emperor of Austria, of the king of Naples, and of the Pope, the Carbonari did not fare better. Gonfalonieri, Toresti, Pellico, Maroncelli, and a great many other noble citizens were the chief victims of this melancholy treachery—but alas, my father!!



## CHAPTER III.

### ARREST.

ON the 28th of January, 1822, I was awakened early in the morning by a bustle and a murmur of voices. It was an unusual occurrence in a house where order and peace had always reigned. I jumped out of bed, hurried on my garments, and rushing into the ante-chamber, I witnessed a sad spectacle. To make the scene more intelligible to the reader I must recur to some antecedents. The extensive practice of my father was among the rich and noble ; but one hour every day he devoted to the poor.

In our spacious antechamber, there was every morning a gathering of from fifty to sixty patients, men, women, and children, of all ages, belonging to the poorest class. At eight o'clock, precisely, a door opened and my father made his appearance in this room, with a smiling and encouraging look. Silence and order reigned around. The doctor began with the first patient, and proceeded in order to the last, never permitting one of them to utter a word of thanks. He always accompanied the prescription with a cheering, or a friendly phrase, and had a kind word for all.

Once, on crossing the door of this antechamber, I saw my father ministering to the poor. I remained fixed to the spot with wonder, then I rushed to my mother, exclaiming :

“ Mamma, how beautiful Papa is to-day ! He is not so cross as usual ! He smiles so sweetly at every one there ! I



saw him caress a very dirty child, and he gave money to a woman with a baby! Oh, I wish Papa would be so kind to me! Oh, I would love him as I love you, but he is so cross!"

"My son," said my mother; "this is very disrespectful in you! Your father wishes you to be perfect in your studies, and in your manners, because he loves you; if you wish to see him smiling so beautifully, you must try to attain that perfection; but you are too mischievous, my dear!"

"I try very hard to please him," I answered, pouting; "but sometimes I feel as if suffocating, when I cannot give way to my feelings. However, I shall endeavor to do my best."

Besides the free consultation, he gave medicine gratis to all those who came there; and very often, perceiving that the disease arose from hunger or distress, he did not fail to administer material or moral consolation.

In this antechamber, whither I rushed on that fatal morning, I found my mother standing as pale as death; her maid weeping beside her, and a quantity of those ragged people standing in confusion; some wailing, some raising their hands with menacing gestures in the air, some exclaiming at intervals, *Our father! He saved my eyes!* He snatched my little John from the clutches of death! He saved my old man! and other plaintive exclamations. The servants passed to and fro, pale and gloomy.

I was frightened and bewildered. I saw something terrible had happened, and ran to my mother with an enquiring look. She gazed at me for a moment, and gathering all her strength, could only say, "Your father was arrested last night;" uttering these words, she fell fainting into the arms of her maid.

I remained thunder-struck. These words produced a ringing sound in my ears, as if I were drowning. I staggered, clutched at a table, literally gasping for breath, and the room swam around with me. Finally a flood of tears came to my relief.



All that day was one of confusion and tears. The doors of the house remained open to all. Hundreds of people, even some belonging to the royalist party, came inquiring, to ascertain the truth; and no one went out without tearful eyes. Those families, who were terror-stricken, despatched their servants to the house, under pretence of sending for the physician. The whole city was appalled. This calamitous day was the day of my father's triumph—the last triumph in his life!

For three days our house continued in a state of alarm and confusion. Of all my father's numerous friends only the lawyers came and went freely. The others were paralyzed with fear, as were the inhabitants in general of the city.

An immense number of arrests had been made of men belonging to the Carbonari.

The lawyers tried to soothe my mother's fears, assuring her that, if my father happened to be,—as they said—the chief of that society, he would be shielded by a royal decree, published a few days before his imprisonment, by which a general pardon was given to the Carbonari.

But that sham pardon, which only aimed at throwing the Carbonari off their guard, was worded so as to give the opportunity to the Military Court of excluding whomsoever it pleased from the benefit.



## CHAPTER IV.

### MY FATHER'S WILL.

It was the fourth day of my father's imprisonment—the day of a mock trial before the military court, and one of dreadful suspense. Nature itself showed symptoms of grief by an unusually gloomy mist.

It was dusk. In a room used as a chapel knelt an octogenarian lady, my father's mother ; two maiden ladies, his sisters ; my mother, four children, the nurse with an infant, and four servants. All the family had gathered to pray in that moment of suspense.

A door slowly opened, the silence which reigned was broken by the words " God be with you in the day of His visitation." The steps of some one had intruded into the privacy of prayer ! We all arose from our kneeling position, and turned our faces towards the speaker.

A tall, venerable man stood looking at us with sympathetic and sorrowful eyes. He was apparelled in a robe of black silk, buttoned down to the ankles. A cloak of the same material hung from his shoulders. A purple collar lined with a white strip of linen, purple stockings, and a gold cross studded with emeralds hung from his neck by a silken cord.

He was past sixty years of age. A profusion of gray hair hung in curls on his shoulders. His physiognomy was benevolent and trust inspiring.

" Oh, Bishop D. !" exclaimed my mother—" Oh, my son's



best friend !” said grandmother—and all, “ What news ? Oh, how good of you ; tell us the news.”

“ Sit down,” said the bishop with a faltering voice.

All sat down, each drawing a child to her side. The man of God seated himself within an arm chair, and the servants remained standing near the door.

It was a solemn moment. All eyes were rivetted on those of the bishop.

“ Good father, what of my son ?” my grandmother eagerly asked.

“ You must prepare yourselves for submission to the will of God, as good Christians,” said the bishop ; “ the decrees of Providence are infallibly for the best. Life is not ours, but belongs to Him who gave it.”

A burst of tears and choking sobs were heard from every side.

My grandmother dropped to the floor—she was dead !

But my mother—she did not weep, nor sob, nor move ; she remained still and silent, with her eyes fixed ! Not a single exclamation, not a single sigh—quite insensible !

Whilst the servants were rushing out for help, several friends who knew of the fatal occurrence came in. Amongst them were two physicians who afforded medical assistance to those of the family who required it.

My mother was still insensible, and a brain fever was announced as imminent.

I was in a nook, crying bitterly, when Bishop D. accosted me, took me by the hand, and drew me out of the chapel, saying,—

“ Let us go to your room.” When there he said, “ Try to be a man ; dress yourself and come with me.”

“ I will not forsake my mother,” said I.

“ A duty more sacred,” replied the bishop, “ calls you now elsewhere. Your father wishes to see you for the last time.”



As soon as we arrived at the prison I felt bewildered.

If a prison has a horrible aspect for a man on account of the ideas of crimes and sufferings associated with it, for a boy of twelve it is a sight of indescribable horror.

The wretchedness of the place, the nauseous odor, the hideous look of the jailers, the oaths and blasphemy of the soldiers, the dreadful sound of iron doors and bolts and keys made my heart so shrink within me, that I stopped motionless at the entrance, gasping for breath.

The bishop seeing me stop with a cadaverous face and staring eyes, grasped me by the arm, and with an energetic shake said :

“ Boy, you promised me in the carriage to be a man ! Nerve yourself ! Increase not the pangs of the last hours of your unhappy father ! ”

These words, uttered in a severe tone and with unusual sternness of look, recalled me to firmness.

The bishop remained in a room, and a turnkey took me by the hand.

Down, down we went, through a sloping tortuous corridor. Finally a key was inserted in a door, a bolt was drawn, and a ponderous iron-bound door rolled in silence upon its hinges. I was thrust in, and the door swung back, closing with a tremendous clang.

I stood within the dark, clammy walls of a subterranean dungeon in which the basest malefactors are usually imprisoned. This kennel was sixteen feet by ten, with a low vault. Some straw on the floor and a wooden stool was the furniture. The light, from a lantern hung on the wall, shone only upon my father, leaving the remainder of the cell in gloom.

I would have given way to a torrent of infantine tears, if it had not been counteracted by the awe-inspiring presence of my father.

There he sat loaded with heavy chains. Grief and resigna



tion making his aspect sublime. His grave and majestic features spoke the grandeur of his soul!

"Come near," he said, after a few seconds.

I approached him, and instinctively knelt at his feet. He looked at me.—I saw his lips quiver. The words which his tortured heart suggested could not find utterance.

After a little while he commenced :

"My beloved son, our days are numbered. He who gave us life, takes it back at his will. Woe to those who have spent it in evil. I repent not of what I have done, nor do I grieve for my lot. I sought to better humanity, and I receive my reward by going soon to see my Maker face to face. My dear child," he continued, with the charm of a loving expression beaming from every feature, "all that I can bequeath to you is a pure, unsullied name, just as my fathers conveyed to me. Endeavor to keep it so. Left an orphan and without a guide in the world, a strong principle of rectitude alone can bring you stainless out of its maze. Be a father to your brothers, and respectful to your excellent mother, and remember my words—follow the example of your father's life."

Those last words he said to me, in a solemn tone, laying a particular stress on each syllable, as a man who was dictating his last will. Then he raised both his hands, and placed them on my head.

His face was majestic! He looked at me with such earnestness as if he would infuse all his soul into me. By degrees his eyes acquired something lustrous and sublime, and lifting them on high, he uttered :

"Father of the orphans! I trust to thy care this child and all my family. Pour, O pour blessings and thy holy influence upon their innocent heads." Then he embraced me, and impressed a passionate kiss upon my forehead.

During this brief meeting all my awe and fright had melted into agonizing sorrow and soul-felt affection.



But what a change had my father undergone since the last time I had seen him. The mask of coldness had been thrown off, and the father showed himself in his true, loving aspect. Oh! how warmly the so much desired look of affection beamed on me then; but like a meteor which would never appear again!

At the moment of his blessing, I felt my heart swelling; its vibrations increasing by degrees in vehemence and frequency. —At the end his kiss. . . . . Oh, the long deserved, the first and last kiss everwhelmed me! Nature overcame restraint, my heart swelled as though it would burst within my bosom; my emotion choked me and consciousness fled.

For some years I did not understand the true meaning of the last words of my father. Still somehow they remained graven on my mind in letters of fire. Development came to my spirit with the knowledge of social life, and it brought the meaning of my sire's last words with it.

Years have followed years, and my attempts towards fulfilling the bequest devolved upon me have been so far unremitted. Up to this time, that fatal moment is as vividly impressed on my mind as if it had occurred but yesterday. A living picture is before my eyes, and my father's voice still sounds in my ears. Sometimes this subject excites me to such a degree as to make me verge on delirium.

And even now, whilst I am consigning that sad episode to these papers, I feel my heart bursting, and silent tears blot the words that I write.



## CHAPTER V.

### EXECUTION.

THE following day the sun shone brilliantly. Its light was to witness the shedding of innocent blood, and to show tyranny in all its barbarity!

A semicircular wall ten feet high, with a seat of masonry along its base, was raised at the end of the plain of *Ciardone* situated three miles north of Palermo, at the bottom of the mountain called *Pellegrino*—Pilgrim.

This was the altar on which nine noble citizens were sacrificed—victims to their love of country! My father and a superannuated priest were of the number.

The government left that place standing as a warning memento intended to strike the disaffected with terror. But the result was quite the reverse. The structure became a shrine, which the youth visited with reverential awe.

Some twenty years after, on the anniversary of my father's martyrdom, I went on my annual pilgrimage to that sacred spot. It was a beautiful day of February. The sky deep blue, and the sun warmed the atmosphere with a genial heat.

Slowly I advanced to the place with my arms crossed on my breast. Two individuals in the garb of artisans were walking before me, on that extensive and usually solitary plain.

They did not hear my approach, for the green sward on which I trod made my slow footsteps noiseless.



One of them was of the age of fifty, and the other a stripling of sixteen.

They stopped before the semicircular wall, and I remained behind.

"What is it, father?" asked the boy.

"Take off your cap, my son."

Both uncovered. I did the same. The eldest continued:

"Do you see that seat?—There sat nine good men whose souls are certainly at this moment hovering over our heads blessing us. They were saints, my son, and what they taught us was all gospel; and they said that Jesus Christ taught freedom; and I believe it. Oh, I wish all the people were like them! This is the very day they were shot. Do you see those round holes in the wall? They are the marks of the bullets which murdered those noble patriots. I stole one of those balls. I ran a great risk to come here by night for it. Some of these days I shall leave it to your keeping.

"But why were they killed?" asked the boy.

"Because they were good; because they loved their country; because they would better the condition of the poor."

"And who killed them?" asked the boy.

"It was the government," answered the father, "which wants us all to be slaves. They were all great folks, rich and wise; and they paid with their lives for the rest of us. We poor, ignorant people are rarely molested for such things. The king despises us. When he can catch the leaders he shoots them. But we—we are in duty bound to follow them for the just cause!—But, mum, boy! Let us kneel and say a Pater Noster to those blessed souls."

I was moved, and remained breathless on the spot.

On rising from their kneeling posture they saw me behind them.



The unlooked for presence of a witness, in that lonely place, took them by surprise. The father looked at me aghast.

"Be not afraid," said I, in a soothing manner, "I am not a spy."

The man looked at me with a searching glance as if he would read my very thoughts. I suppose that the agitation expressed by my looks, and the tone of my voice reassured the man, who continued :

"Sir, I do not know who you are, but your countenance is good, and I trust you. Only consider, sir, that I am the father of a family—"

"Never mind who I am," I interrupted, "only rest assured that your trust is well placed."

Turning to the boy, who was still uncovered, I placed my hand on his shoulder and said :

"Boy, what your father has told you is perfectly true ; but if you will have the ambition of being a free man, you must begin by being good and honest. Freedom comes from the infinitely good God, and without virtue is of but short duration."

Then I left them in a state of complete amazement.

But let us accomplish the painful task of narrating the events of that first of February, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two. All the city was thrown into the deepest mourning. The stores were all closed. The streets wore a gloomy aspect. Tribunals and courts were adjourned for want of litigants. Only a few stragglers belonging to the needy classes were seen in the streets. The most remarkable thing was, that not a single person went to see the execution. I say the most remarkable, because there is no part of the world where there is not a class of men who go to see executions as a sport. This was a solemn demonstration of the feeling of an entire population.

One of the ugliest features of tyranny is, that not contented with the blood of the victim, it strips the children of their



property, under the name of confiscation. Thus it prevents the growing shoots from receiving any sort of cultivation; knowing how pernicious education is to its interests. Oh, if one could have looked for a while on the frantic and wretched condition of the inmates of my house on that terrible day! My father was no more; my grand-mother a corpse; my mother lying with a brain fever; my aunts weeping helplessly on their couch; the children crying; the servants bewildered and stupefied. The most firmness displayed was on my part. I was the strongest, but I was only a boy. I bent my will to manly purposes, but now and then I went to my room to pour out a flood of tears which I had restrained until I was nearly suffocated.

Towards evening bishop D. came in, and taking me by the hand, said in a soothing manner:

“This is a day of trial, my son.”

“Oh, tell me of my father! my heart is breaking!”

“Your father is in heaven,” he replied. “He died as he lived—an angel!”

This was too much for me. Tears intermingled with choking sobs overmastered me.

“That is right,” said the bishop, “weep as much as you wish, because you have need of strength and manly energy.”

After the lapse of half an hour, he said, “Now compose yourself; think of your mother, and of the children, and prepare yourself for something unpleasant.”

I stared at him. I could not think of anything worse than the position in which we then were,—and he proceeded:

“We must try to hide elsewhere, in trusty hands, all the movable property we can, in order to save something from the general wreck.”

“Condemned even to beggary,” replied I, with a bitter and savage exclamation. “Well let them have everything. I loathe



to hide what rightfully belongs to us, like a house-breaker who conceals stolen property."

"You are not wise," retorted the bishop. "This is not for you alone. Your mother—and the children—!"

"Well, I will do what you say," I answered in an exasperated manner, "but listen to me, my father's excellent friend. I swear to God that the time will come when my father's blood shall be revenged!"

"Hush, hush, for God's sake," interrupted the good man. "You know not what you say! A single word, a single gesture would destroy you!"

All the evening passed in arranging and carrying money, sets of silver, jewels, clothing, linen, and books to the Bishop's house, which was near at hand.

The expression, carrying money, would certainly appear an exaggeration to a foreigner, who has not been in Sicily, studying the system of that unhappy country.

Joint stock banking is unknown there. Only one bank exists; and that belongs to the government.

In 1812 and 1821 the King appropriated to himself by force, all the deposits belonging to private citizens, giving in exchange government stock.

All endeavors to put it in circulation proved a complete failure.

The people would not trust a farthing in the hands of their ruler.

Commerce is thwarted; speculations crossed; in a word it is a system which fosters a general mistrust.

All this obliges the money-holders to keep their hoards locked up uselessly in iron chests. The scarcity of gold and the abundance of silver coins adding naturally to the volume and weight caused by the keeping or carrying of money to be a burdensome affair. In fine, money, which, in well-governed countries is the source of public wealth, and the great lever of industry and commerce, is there the nurse either of avarice or dissipation.



## CHAPTER VI.

### FAMILY ECONOMY.

WE had five servants. The oldest, Rosalia by name, was sixty years old. She had been born, and had married in our house. Her husband, my grand-father's servant, was dead. She performed the duty of cook, and general overseer.

Her conjugal state had been blessed with two sons and a daughter, all born and living in our house, the first in the capacity of coachman, the second of a lackey, and the girl in that of chambermaid.

Through the influence of my grand-mother, the coachman had married a beautiful buxom girl, who acted as nurse. This class of people are generally good and trustworthy. Their affection for their masters has no limit. A servant's risking his life for the defence of his master is an ordinary occurrence. They take such an interest in the affairs of their employers that sometimes it becomes troublesome. When very old and useless they are kept in the house as we keep an old piece of furniture—as a memento of our infancy. They are much respected, and well cared for, and, consequently never abuse the confidence or the affections of their masters. They bear corrections as children from their parents, but impositions never.

It was the 30th of August, one day previous to the general moving proscribed by the law of leases, we had to move from our home—which had been taken from us.

After a long and dangerous illness, my mother slowly recov-



ered, physically—morally she never did. She had called on that morning all the domestics together into the dining-room. Her face was pale and calm, but it was that calmness which speaks of deep sorrows and of saintly resignation.

I sat beside her at the head of the table. She had made me prepare the accounts of the five servants, on separate strips of paper, with a pile of dollars on each.

They always left their savings in my mother's keeping—for the institution of savings banks is not known in that country.

All came in and remained standing around the table, with their heads bent down, in token of grief. They surmised the object of the summons. My mother looked at them and remained silent. She knew not how to begin. I knew what was about to follow, and a feeling of despondency stole over me, for I loved them all.

After a struggle with her violent inward emotions, pressing her trembling hands to her breast, my mother said :

“ My friends, not contented with having snatched from my bosom the treasure of my heart, the father of my children, my enemies have reduced us to penury and want, and in consequence they deprive one of the last consolation of seeing myself surrounded by you whose affectionate cares and solitudes have heretofore ministered to my wants. My heart is rent in parting with you, but stern necessity commands it, and I submit. I beg of you,” she continued, “ not to give way to feelings which I can read in your eyes. No leave-taking. I am too weak, and cannot bear any strong excitement. I hope that you will come very often to see us. Thus you will have abundant opportunities of showing your sympathy. Here is the account and the money, which all of you have honestly earned in many years of hard and affectionate service. I bless you all in the name of God, and wish you prosperity.”

As these words fell from my mother's lips, the frank honest faces of the domestics were flushed, and with glowing eyes all replied :



“No, Signorina, we shall never leave you—we do not want any money—how can we forsake the children?”

Making a gesture with her hand, partly of command, and partly of entreaty, and with tearful eyes, and a soft tone of voice, my mother added, “I thank you, but that is unreasonable, and I will never permit it.”

“Now silence, all of you,” chimed in Rosalia, drawing up her portly figure. Her brows were knitted, her dark eyes glowed with a fiery lustre; her brown face was pale, and her hair dishevelled, “Hush with your nonsense; you are young (addressing her children), and must take care of yourselves. I am glad to hear you speaking in this way, and I beg you, Signora, not to be offended at their words, they are poor, ignorant children. Pardon, Signora, their indelicacy and bluntness. You must attribute it to the prompting of their hearts. This is all settled, I know, and—you hush, I tell you,” (turning to the valet, who had shown symptoms of rebellion), “and now for my own case, it is one quite dissimilar. I am an old, cracked crone. Nobody would have me, even for the keeping. I have nowhere to go, and, besides, I have seen all of you born—not you, Signora, but it is all the same—I know the day, and the week, and the month, and the year of their coming into the world; even the hour, and if it was good or bad weather; and this is settled too, Signora, I remain here with you, with my children” (pointing at us)—“and this is all settled too. About my new wages, we shall have time enough to speak; and this is all settled too. About my money, I beg of you, Signora, to keep it for me. About my children; allow them, Signora, to stay with you until they find employment elsewhere. All settled; all settled. I stay with my children until death!” And so saying she came round, clasped me in her arms, and embraced me with such fervor as almost deprived me of breath.



## CHAPTER VII.

### A NEW HOME.

SETTLED now in a new home, we entered upon a new method of life. I was fourteen years old, Albert was eleven, Theodore nine, Antonietta three, and there was a baby by the name of Vincent. Such was the number of the bereaved family, with my mother at the head, whose only thoughts were to educate her children to the best of her ability.

The young nurse, after many entreaties, even on the part of her husband, was allowed to remain in the house. Old, stout, Rosalia, partly by prayers, partly with blunt wilfulness, officiated in all the departments of house work. I attended school, and in leisure hours I went to bishop D., who undertook to give a finish to my instructions.

Still the change was appallingly apparent. Like a marsh fog a thick gloom hovered over our heads. The home of our ancestors was no more! Besides its elegance and comfort, that I missed, every room, every nook, every loop in it, had a pleasant association for me; and all that had disappeared. Where were all those nobles and dignitaries, who had made so many fair promises? The widow and the orphans were left to oblivion. To all the pompous demonstrations those persons had made, my mother had always answered, "My only object in life is, to bring up my children in a manner worthy of their name. On this account, I shall be very thankful for your protection. They are tender shoots, which need powerful support; I am but a slender reed."



Fair weather friends, in foul weather disappear! Promises were forgotten, the orphans forsaken.

I was naturally of an excitable temper; frank, plain, and out-spoken; quick in all my doings, restless and nervous in all my actions.

I could not sit in my study as other persons do. I learned my lessons striding up and down the room. When I had to write my position changed every five minutes: sometimes lying flat on the table, then standing with one foot on the chair, often kneeling on the chair, and so on, performing every kind of contortion.

I was in one of those positions one day, when I was startled by the blunt voice of Rosalia:

"My gracious! Do you study your lessons in that snaky position! Fie on you, boy!"

"What's ado?" said I, in a testy way.

"Bless your soul, my boy! There is the good old bishop, and mamma wants you."

"Very well," I said, and in a few bounds I was at my mother's side, where I found bishop D. giving sugar plums to the little ones.

After caressing us, he turned to the nurse, "Mary, dear, take the children to play; and you, Alfio, remain here."

"My good lady," he addressed my mother; "your children are all small, and your means are so limited, as not to allow you to give a long and expensive education to all. We must find out some mode of relief, otherwise you will be compelled to put them to a trade.

A flush passed over my mother's face. She pressed her hand over her heart; but immediately gaining composure said:

"Anything that is for their welfare I will do, even to the sacrifice of my life, if it must needs be."

The bishop continued: "There is a legacy left to a college



by a rich nobleman, to educate a number of boys of good families, up to the age of twenty-four, in all kinds of accomplishments and studies, free of expense, even to the clothing. At present two places are vacant, and this is an excellent opportunity for your children."

"I know it," answered my mother. "If any act of humiliation upon my part could be of any use, I am ready to surrender my feelings. But it will be all in vain. My submission to the butchers of my children's sire, will be for them a good occasion to add scorn to cruelty, and to lay it as a trophy of loyalty at the feet of their master!" These words she uttered with a haughty, animated face.

The bishop gazed at her with a sympathetic look, and nodding his head, said:

"Please calm yourself, lady. The deference you have been so kind as to show for me, makes me bold to remind you that this boy present—your son—on account of his fiery temper, precocity of mind, and political position, requires rather a stringent education; and your words do not conduce to that. As for what you said, permit me to tell you that you are mistaken. Public opinion is very strong in favor of the memory of your sainted husband; and even that party which were his political enemies, regret his loss, and join in the general sympathy. The marquis Pasquali, one of the doctor's affectionate clients, is the president of the Board of Public Instruction, and to him is devolved the admission of the students of the college. I have brought this petition, that you will present to him—if you please. I have obtained a private audience for you from his secretary. To-morrow morning at nine o'clock, if convenient, you may go to his palace, taking all your children with you. Now, madam, I leave you with the blessing of the Almighty."

The bishop departed. My mother flung her arms around my neck and kissed me.



"My son," she said, "we shall go to-morrow, cost what it may, provided I do not see any of you wear the garb of an artisan. Ah!" she shuddered, "a mechanic—God forbid!"

Those last words of my mother far from expressing a peculiar feeling of her own, afford an insight into the feelings of a class fostered on purpose by the ruling power, to disunite the citizens in a radical manner, and to prevent their ever forming a compact and harmonious body. In those times the old nobles were ashamed to be learned, or to hold an office. The educated class deemed it a dishonor to have a relative a mechanic, and the mechanics felt superior to the lower classes.

My mother's pride consisted in not suffering the name of Balzani to descend from the sphere in which our forefathers had moved.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### MARQUIS PASQUALI.

THE city of Palermo is one of the most ancient of Italy, having been founded by the Phœnicians.

It lies on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea,  $38^{\circ} 6' 44''$  latitude West and  $31^{\circ} 1'$  longitude East.

The size of the old city is one square mile. A fortified wall encloses it. A moat, which once surrounded it, is now filled up in several places. Two large streets cross each other at the centre and terminate in four large gates with bastions.

There are besides, ten other gates at irregular distances from each other. The character of the streets in general is narrow and crooked, according to the custom of the remote period in which it was built.

In vain does the traveller seek for the regularity of streets



and uniform style of buildings met with in common cities, but he finds a compensation in the gorgeousness of the baronial palaces, in the grandeur of some Saracen buildings still existing, in the magnificence of the churches, and in the historical mementoes found almost at every turn.

In the lapse of centuries, the suburbs around it have become so densely populated as to constitute a portion of the city, and on account of their wide streets and better ventilated houses, they have become the most pleasant part to dwell in. That part on the outside of the gate northwest, called *Porta Macqueda*, has become the most fashionable by the attraction of its many palaces, built in modern style. In one of those palaces lived the Marquis Pasquali.

On the day appointed by Bishop D., my mother, with her children, all dressed in deep mourning, were ushered into a large receiving room, furnished and decorated in Oriental style.

After half an hour of painful waiting, a door opened and the Marquis presented himself.

He was a man of eighty, tall and thin, his hair as white as snow, his complexion florid, his aspect stern, his carriage haughty and abrupt.

He advanced towards us, bowed in a courtly manner, and said :

“ Madam, to what cause shall I ascribe this pleasure ?”

My mother arose trembling in every limb, and placing us before her, handed him the petition, described the helpless position of her children, and concluded by soliciting the appointment of the two eldest to the vacancies in the college.

All the time my mother was speaking, the eye-brows of the Marquis were contracted, his thin, colorless lips remained compressed, and his small gray eyes darted glances of fire.

Now and then he turned them towards me with a fiend-like expression, and scrutinized my features so closely that through fear I shrunk from meeting them.



When my mother finished there was a moment of silence, the silence which precedes the tempest.

His face was clouded, and his eyes were flashing, as with a shrill voice he exclaimed :

“ Signora, I am astonished ! I cannot conceive what sort of world I live in ! Is it possible, that you, you, Signora, the wife of a felon, a low conspirator, ventures to apply for help ! And what is the more astonishing, you crave the means for nurturing the whelps of the lion ! Do you think that his Sacred Majesty, though merciful and good-hearted, is so unwise as to foster young snakes in his bosom, so that, when they are grown, they may turn upon him and sting him to the heart ? Oh, no—no—no ! ”

I saw my mother’s face assume a ghastly livid hue. She could not stand.

The Marquis advanced a step, and in a polite manner said :

“ Sit down, Signora, on this sofa. Calm yourself. Hitherto I have spoken as a good subject ought. Now listen to me as a friend.

“ I esteemed the doctor, and am of opinion that the sins of the fathers must not be visited on their sons, but we must do for them what may conduce to their civil and religious welfare. My advice, Signora, as a friend is, to renounce for your children the prejudice of class. Dismiss the idea of a refined education, and train them up in obscurity and in the holy fear of God ! ”

My mother, who by this time had nerved herself and regained composure, rose from her seat majestically and dignifiedly, and, fixing upon the marquis a look of indignation and contempt, made this reply :

“ Marquis Pasquali, I thank you for the unasked advice. I never dreamed of going anywhere for help. A friend of mine, and yours also, induced me to this step—but no matter ! I shall endeavor to act so that my children may never recollect



this day. As for you, you have tried to humiliate my children and myself, and have merited nothing but the loss of your own self-esteem and my utter contempt!"

In a haughty manner she then took my youngest brother and my little sister by the hand, and turned to the door, leaving the Marquis in a state of unenviable mortification.

Not a word was uttered on our way. When we arrived home I went into my mother's room. She sat in an arm-chair with her cheek supported by her right hand. She was very pale, but her countenance was calm and solemn. I stood with my eyes fixed on her face. I was afraid of recalling her painful emotions.

After continuing some time in sorrowful silence, with a low, deep, but firm voice, my mother said :

"My son, God's will be done ! There is no one to take our part, none in whom we can confide. We must trust in God, and in our own exertions, strengthened by His help. We will leave our affairs entirely to Him. I am confident He will not abandon us !"

"Mamma," I answered, "I will trust entirely to Providence ! When you have no more money, I shall work hard to maintain you and my brothers and sister. The only boon I ask is, your promise that you will try in every possible way to be cheerful. This will give me courage, and power of endurance."

The tragedy of my father, and the many vicissitudes which we had undergone in a period less than a year, had produced a change in me. This last scene at the Marquis's working on my ardent, sensitive nature, completed it. I had already drunk the bitter waters of humiliation, and this, instead, of acting in a discouraging manner, had served to fortify my spirit, and call forth my natural pride. I felt devotedly and ardently ready for any exertion, any sacrifice, to better the position of my family, independently of human help.



## CHAPTER IX.

### FIRST FRIENDS.

THE popular sympathy had penetrated even into the schools. The Italians are generally warm-hearted and impulsive. These qualities in youth, of course, rise to the very highest pitch. Since the misfortune of our house, all the boys in my classes vied with each other in acts of kindness and sympathy towards me. My sulkiness they did not heed. They attributed my reservedness to grief, and respected it. Very often they tried to make me presents, but I always declined such advances, though with the gentleness becoming a refined education and a grateful heart. The teachers shared in those feelings. They furnished me with books, in the most delicate manner.

There was an examination every month, and they gave to the best scholar a certificate printed on a piece of colored paper. After the death of my father, on alternate months, they gave a prize. This was always a book of such a kind, as was afterwards to be used in the school. And as it so chanced, (as they said,) that I was the best in the class, the book was awarded to me—and every one was satisfied. My school mates never complained.

I comprehended the ruse, and regretted it; for I was not in want of means, and the teachers, from whom the favor came, were very poor. But I could not feel offended.

I have always cherished in my heart the memory of those noble men:



Fellow men, and you rich ones, who toss your donations to the poor under the eyes of the multitude, and in a manner to mortify the self-esteem of man ; learn from these poor but noble beings, how to be charitable, only for charity's sake !

Three years had quietly rolled on, and I was in the first class. There are only two public institutions in Palermo : the Jesuit's and the Normal School. I went to the Normal School. My father did not incline to the other.

Amongst my young and warm-hearted companions, there were six, whose kindness had been so unobtrusive, and their sympathy so lightly and nobly touched, that I felt attached to them. After school they had always something to do in my direction, and accompanied me on my way homeward. By degrees our fellowship ripened into intimacy, and we pledged to each other a true and everlasting friendship.

As these young men occupy an important place in this history of my life, I here introduce a brief notice of them under the following names : Andrea, the son of a rich merchant ; Onofrio, the son of a country baron ; Ettore, the son of a marquis ; Guiseppe, the son of a lawyer of distinction ; Antonio, who was an orphan with a splendid income ; and Domenico, who belonged to one of the noble families residing in a mansion amongst the mountains. They were about my own age.

At the end of the academical year we separated ; my friends going to sport and enjoy themselves in the country, and I to pass my vacations by the side of my mother, and in company with my brothers and sisters.



## CHAPTER X.

### UNIVERSITIES.

TYRANTS, like all degraded persons, who have not entirely lost the last blush of shame always try to maintain an outward appearance of decorum. Along their dark career they scatter some shining and conspicuous actions, which serve to hide their true character, by dazzling the eyes of superficial observers. Whilst they use every means to impoverish, demoralize and brutalize their people, they surround everything with forms calculated to give to the stranger an impression of their conduct directly the reverse of the reality.

The King of Naples is one of this kind.

Educate the people!—is the harmonizing voice which rises imposingly from the midst of the civilized world. Educate the people, and the country of Empedocles, Archimedes and Diodorus will develop genius, which for want of education now lies hidden in the boor!

“Come, visit the country—answers the king\*—and see for yourselves what my paternal cares do! Come and you will perceive that, if sciences and arts are not in the ascendant, it is not my fault, but the degeneracy of the human race!” In fact, there is a ministry as it is called of public instruction, and boards of the same denomination are installed in every principal city, normal schools, two universities, and all wearing a wholesome, prosperous aspect.

\*Diplomatic correspondence between England and Naples, 1850.



But, let us look at them more in detail.

The so-called normal schools are few in number ; and as there are no other public schools for which they may serve as models, and which they may supply with teachers, are undeserving of their names. They are maintained by the government and kept under its absolute surveillance. They are professedly intended for educating boys of every class. There is only one in Palermo, and one in each of the principal cities of the island. But, even where they exist, few partake of their benefit ; for, far from inciting parents to send their boys to school, the directors do not admit any that are poorly dressed. This, together with the expense of books and stationery, precludes most of the parents from sending their sons. In fact the school of the city of Palermo (a city of two hundred thousand souls) can only boast of about three hundred pupils.

The tuition embraces all branches from spelling to rhetoric, including the Latin and Italian classics. This course completed, the pupil is admitted to the university.

There is besides in Palermo the Jesuit school on the same plan. Still there is a difference worth mentioning.

High-toned Italian literature is rather neglected, and in its stead the pupils are brought up thorough Latin scholars, so as to enable them in the class of philosophy to speak their dissertation in Latin. But what creates a decided aversion to that school is an atmosphere of gloom and mystery which hangs over everything, and the dextrous cunning of the Jesuits in decoying into their ranks those youths in whom they perceive a lurking spark of genius. In consequence of this unpopularity their schools have become almost nominal.

There are in Sicily two universities, one in Palermo and the other in Catania. They are furnished with rich libraries, splendid picture galleries, museums of natural history, the best possible anatomical amphitheatre, and very learned professors, who converse at times in committee, to concert measures for



the greater progress of the students. Order, discipline and all the outward regulations are such as to enchant the tourist who visits them and listens once or twice to the lectures.

Entering the portico in the morning, it is beautiful to see in the large and splendid court-yard of the university of Palermo, nearly four hundred young men, well dressed, and with sober aspects, the most them of with intellectual physiognomies, collected in good order before the doors of the lecture rooms. It is pleasant to accompany them in, and listen to the lectures and the subsequent discussions! But let us raise the veil! Let us lift the beautifully adorned covering of this tomb, and look within.

If you think that the youth you have seen composedly gathered under the arches of the university represent the offspring of the people, you are sorely mistaken. They are mostly the children of the affluent.

Nominally, every one is admitted to the lectures. But those who wish to enter on the course either of law or medicine must show to the rector of the university a certificate of their having been through in a satisfactory manner, the whole circle of studies at the normal schools, or at the schools of the Jesuits, accompanied by a permission of the chief of the police, and by an attestation of their curate, of having frequently confessed. With these passports the student is admitted to the lectures on philosophy.

At the end of the year he must present himself provided with new certificates, adding to them that of *Matricola*, proficiency in philosophy. Then he is admitted to the regular course of the sciences.

Besides the great loss of time, and the difficulties of obtaining them, these certificates cost money; which, united to the expenses of books, writing materials, and decent apparel, form the bar to education, for a people kept in a state verging on starvation.



But still the public schools are there—and the universities are there, with their professors, libraries, etc.—and the vigilant boards of public instruction are there, always busy—and there is also the ever vigilant Ministry. At least this ought to give a thorough education to this class of the elite—nothing of the kind!

All elementary books for the classes of Philosophy, Moral Sciences, Political Economy; in a word, for those studies, which give the knowledge of moral, civil, and political intercourse, are purposely written by Jesuits.

As a matter of course the principles laid down and their developments, far from being adequate to the progress of the age, serve to keep the mind a century back, and train the youth in superstition, and in the belief of Divine Right. Blind servility only is required!

All the books which are capable of obviating the execution of this plan is forbidden, including most of the treasures of literature. The professors of the university are commanded to withhold any explanation, which might let in a glimmer of the interdicted light.

A wonderful system of espionage is carried on through all the classes. Thus the land which gave birth to the beautiful language, and which rekindled the fire of literature, buried in the night of centuries, has been doomed by a crafty conspiracy of priest and king to be lulled in the narcotic sleep of ignorance.

But, in one respect, they have reckoned without their host. To check the fervor of our youth, is a thing next to an impossibility. Agreeably to a law of human nature, prohibition begat an eager longing for the forbidden fruit.

This ardent wish led to the formation of a society amongst the students, the object of which was, to get interdicted books.

Every member, who could, by any possibility, procure one, had to present it to the President, who passed it in turn to all



the members, specifying the length of time for which it might be kept.

This reading mania was not confined to old books alone. All the works of literature, published at that time in Brussels, were smuggled into the country. They were, of course, included in the prohibited list.

With what a zest I passed entire nights in reading a freshly arrived book, which I was permitted to keep only one day !

This inhibition proved productive of both good and evil. The shortness of time allotted to read a book, sharpened the intellect, and increased the avidity for lore. The knowledge of the rights of man rose before our eyes like the sun from the east after the darkness of night.

The secrecy of the association, the fear of imprisonment, the ingenious schemes to procure books, the continual endeavors to devise means, in order not to be detected, surrounded us with an awful mystery. This gave us a premature self-importance, and a liking for conspiracy. But amongst the many books procured through dangers, and with palpitating hearts, there were some, which were deservedly forbidden to the young.

This was a poison which ruined many, and from which others had a narrow escape. I speak of that kind of licentious literature which corrupts virgin souls and inexperienced youth. Unfortunately the most of those books are written by master pens, full of learning, elegance, and wit.

But to return. There is no class of modern languages in the schools. It would be an inconsistency on the part of the government to teach the languages, whilst it contrives by all means to seclude us entirely from the nations which speak them.

Once, on my complaining of this to the Father Rector, he answered me in the following words :

“ What is the use of overburdening the youth with such



things ? Our country is not a commercial one. We rarely see a foreigner, and those who come, speak Italian.”

Not to enlarge on the many interruptions caused by the government in order to distract the studious youths from their studies, I will close this chapter with the narration of a simple fact.

Once the king had the nightmare. He thought he saw a revolutionary movement in Catania. He awoke, terrified, and immediately ordered the University to be closed, permitting the students who would continue the course to be admitted into that of Palermo—a futile permission, because he knew that the majority had not the means of doing it.

It was just in the middle of the season. The students were distressed. Poor youths, what could they do ? Those who could afford it, rushed to the University of Palermo. Over mountains and plains, some in carriages, jolting, lumbering over almost impracticable roads, some on horseback, some on mules, others riding on asses, many on foot, a bundle tied on their back, a staff in their hand, an oath on their lips, and a curse in their heart, they hastened to the Capitol, like the remains of a defeated army.

No matter for the ordeal, the studious youth would not lose one season. But all the manœuvring and restrictions, and all the obstructions thrown in the path of education have proved of no avail.

The persecution of learning has given rise to a host of literary youth, to whom the country looks as its hope for the time to come !



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BIBLE.

Two years of study at the University had passed. My six friends had received the certificate of proficiency in philosophy and begun the study of law. I commenced the course of medicine.

At this time, on account of the firmness of my character, and the misfortune of my father, which always encircled the name of the family with a halo of respect, I was the President of the reading secret society. My friends made part of it. I had been of very little use to this association. Reserved and proud by nature, I could never induce myself to ask a forbidden book from those acquaintances whom I knew possessed them. The simple idea of a refusal was sufficient to stifle in me any longing for them. Upward of two hundred volumes of my father's library Bishop D. had kept with him at my mother's request. "You are too young," he once said; "when you begin to have some grey hair I shall give you back your books."

In the past two years my six friends and I had been inseparable. We had formed a class of French and of dancing in the house of Ettore, the son of the Marquis.

Although of different temperaments, we were all endowed with good hearts, and we had by careful study learned to bear with each other in those little points on which our views did not harmonize. By common consent we admonished one an-



other on those failings by which inexperienced youth becomes disagreeable in society.

One day at the end of November, after the lectures, I found as usual, my friends under the portico waiting for me. When I approached them, Ettore shook my arm and in a lively manner said :

“ Alfio, we shall have fun to-day. See what a glorious sky, what a soft air we have ! We will be merry.”

“ What is in the wind, to-day ?” I asked.

“ Let us go on our way,” chimed in Onofrio. “ Here *aqui parete un delatore asconde*—every wall hides in itself a spy.”

Silently we went to the palace of Ettore, up to the fencing gallery. There we had no fear of intrusion.

“ Well, what is it,” I asked ; “ did you find the copy of the Koran in French ?”

“ No,” answered he. “ You know that I am acquainted with that kind but very spoiled young man, the son of the American consul. Last night I went to pay a visit to his mother, who is a sweet lady, beautiful and intelligent. Well, she introduced me to an American captain who was there. His name is Captain Bas——, Baz——. Oh, what a pity civilized people like them should possess such barbarous names ! Captain Bax——, Baxter, here it is. Captain Baxter. He was very much taken with me. We conversed all the evening. He invited me to go and sup with him this evening on board his vessel. But I told him that he might repent of his kind offer because I could not accept it unless he extended his invitation to my six friends. ‘ Six,’ he said good humoredly, ‘ well, all your friends are welcome on board the Eagle.’ ”

“ But,” said Antonio, “ we cannot understand him.”

“ Why,” answered Ettore, with a boisterous laugh, “ how could I converse with him the whole evening ? He speaks French like a book, but this is nothing. Now, attention : open



your ears—he will present each of us with a book, and now guess what book—it is a, a, a Bible.

An oh! of pleasure escaped from the lips of all. A general round of talk commenced, but my mind was already busy with the thought of where I could hide the Bible in my house. This I deemed a very providential circumstance.

In our secret circulation of books, I had read the Bible in a very rapid manner, for lack of time. I had found nothing in it contrary to morality, to religion, or to the government. And I could not comprehend the reason of such a strict prohibition of this sacred book.

At five o'clock my friends were all at my house, and we started for the harbor, where the ship *Eagle* was moored. The Italians have generally a very elevated idea of the Americans. With this name they associate the idea of valor, wealth, generosity, and nobleness of character. American is an attractive, sweet-sounding word. A name which commands esteem and respect. This sentiment arises naturally in a people who long for liberty towards a people who acquired it with so much bravery and strenuous endurance. With this disposition of mind we went on board.

Captain Baxter was a man of middle size, not more than sixty years of age, of light complexion, with a few grey hairs, large forehead, and a florid face which wore a decidedly benevolent expression. His bearing was easy and noble.

After the usual formalities of introduction, the captain said that it was time to take tea, if we would be kind enough to drink a cup of it in his company. We accepted with thanks, and placed ourselves at the table. For an instant we cast at each other a single look, which any one would have thought indifferent, but it was full of meaning to us. In another place I shall show how much meaning the Sicilian conveys with a single glance. It is sufficient to say for the present that our eloquent look implied “are we sick that we must take tea?”



Tea is never used among us but as a medicine. The doctors order it in case of cold to promote perspiration. Notwithstanding, we drank our tea and partook of the good cheer of the table.

All this time not a word was exchanged. When the mate arose the captain good humoredly said, "Gentlemen, you are not used to an American supper. Allow me to offer you a glass of wine."

Immediately the waiter brought in a salver with bottles of champagne, cakes and confectionery. When the bottle passed round the captain rose up and gave a toast to the company—then Ettore arose, and flourishing his glass in the air, said, "To the Captain."

The conversation became animated. Hitherto I had not uttered a word. When the bottle went round again, I rose and with a loud and animated voice proposed a toast—George Washington, the peerless hero!—It had an effect quite electrical. The response was unanimous and loud, while the voice of the captain was heard above all the rest. After this the conversation turned on the American Revolution, and the captain was exceedingly pleased to find us so well informed on that subject. Guiseppe explained to him that the best history of that epoch had been written by an Italian.

"Well," the captain replied, "so much bloodshed, so much property destroyed, so much suffering would have been of no avail, if there had not been at the head a hero specially prepared by divine providence, and absolutely exempt from ambition."

"You will pardon me, captain," said I, "if I make an observation. I have always thought the American hero the most ambitious man that ever existed."

"What!" exclaimed the captain.

"Excuse me," I answered, "all eyes do not see the same object in the same light; and every one has his peculiar mode of arguing."



"Would you be so kind as to give me your views of the subject?"

"I am at your commands," I answered; "ambition is characteristic of man; nay, it is necessary. There is a mean ambition and a noble ambition. The former is only for self, the latter for mankind, and very often with the sacrifice of self. Man lives not by bread alone. He is happy who deems himself so. True happiness is found in a pure conscience. Glory and renown was Washington's ambition. Thus it was with Napoleon. But in him glory was sullied by the ambition of material power. He was a genius. Wise in counsel, and valiant in the field. He snatched with one hand the laurels of all the Cesars, and became a demi-god. He could, by uttering a word, have been hailed as the benefactor of mankind, but his ambition withheld him from it. Thus he annihilated the work of half a century, dragged Europe into misery, and finished by falling headlong into the whirlpool he had agitated with his own hand. Washington—the mention of whose name, calls forth feelings of gratitude and love: Washington, the Cincinnatus of our era,—comprehended the wants of the people, understood his calling, and looking at the offered crown with scorn, he declared his country free. A material crown was too mean an object for the ambition of such a man. He aspired to the sway of hearts, and an imperishable shrine has been built to him in the heart of an entire nation. He was one of those privileged souls who feel that kind of intoxication known only to heroes; which makes difficulties of every form disappear, and who straightway perceives the terminus of the lists that the soul had already passed rapidly through. His is a name that will never be buried in oblivion. The mighty hand of time will have no power to erase it. It is a name that like a splendid luminary will cross the sky of centuries to set with the end of the world.—This I call true ambition. This was



the ambition possessed by Washington. Can you find any greater than this ?”

Huzzas upon huzzas thundered in the cabin, and the wine circulated freely. I felt in a blaze, my pulse beat violently, my head ached. All at once a gloom pervaded my mind.—I thought of my father.

A little while after, Onofrio said to the captain ; “ I think that the heirs of this great man must be very rich.”

The captain answered briefly, “ He left no children ;” and then “ Excuse me, gentlemen, for a moment.” He went into his cabin and soon returned carrying seven small books, nicely bound. They were Bibles in the Italian language. He handed one to each of us with great seriousness, and said,

“ Gentlemen, this I deem the best present I can make to you. I hope this book will help you in the guidance of your conduct through life.”

By this time it was twelve o’clock ; so exchanging the warmest compliments, and bidding the captain farewell, we departed.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE THIRD CLASS.

AT about this time an accident befell me, which had almost led to fatal consequences.

It was a beautiful morning in October. My friend Ettore had invited me to ride. We were enjoying a saunter along the delicious ground of *la Marina*, when we were met by two young men galloping on beautiful horses. One of them was the son of the duke of S——, Ettore's cousin; belonging to one of the most aristocratic families. On arriving within speaking distance my friend hailed him with his usual joviality. But the young nobleman instead of answering him in a corresponding manner, as he was wont, tossed up his head, and darted at him a haughty and scornful glance. My friend Ettore was a young man of hot temperament, yet possessed of a determined spirit. At this insult from his cousin, he became, by turns, red as scarlet, and then, pale as death.

“Wait a moment,” he said to me; and turning his horse's head he galloped back.

I followed him, of course. But I was too late, to prevent the mischief. Ettore had overtaken the party and I arrived on the spot the moment he was inflicting on his cousin a cut with his whip.

I placed myself between them trying to allay their fury. The young nobleman, seeing the impossibility of revenging the offense at the moment, raving with anger said: “You shall hear from me. You shall be cut off from society for associ-



ating with such low people," and so saying he glanced scornfully at me.

His companion was also of a noble family, yet he sided with Ettore. He belonged to the new school.

That same morning I hastened to Onofrio's and Domenico's, whose families lived in friendly intercourse with that of Ettore.

I related to them the adventure and begged their interference, announcing at the same time my resolution to withdraw from their society ; as being the innocent cause of such a scandal, I did not wish to have it repeated.

The result of this affair fell short of my expectation. The two fathers, both haughty but of different principles agreed to put an end to the quarrel, not because they yielded an inch in their opposite principles, but for their children's personal safety.

The next day Ettore, Onofrio, and Domenico, accompanied by the youth who had been present at the broil, and two other young scions of nobility came to my house to assure me of their friendship, and to testify that the young nobility, far from seeking to hold aloof from the educated class, wished to unite with them in social intercourse.

To make this affair clear, and give an inkling of the opposite feelings that prevailed amongst the nobility, and gave rise to this quarrel, I will glance retrospectively at the origin and progress of the third class in society. In the middle ages society was divided into two classes.—the nobility and the plebian. The clergy was not a class, but a powerful separate body drawn from both classes. It was a dry sponge in the midst of society, sucking its vital elements, without yielding any profit to society in return.

This was the epoch in which, in consequence of the invasion of the barbarians, Italy continued immersed in ignorance and superstition. It was reserved for the great Frederic the Second to inaugurate the new era of light. This monarch's high-



est aspiration was to foster, promote, and support the culture of the intellect.

In the thirteenth century—the epoch in which the language of Dante first rose into notice—Frederic, having the celebrated Pier delle Vigne as his prime minister, filled his court with the best talent of Sicily. He not only encouraged the new language just born in Sicily, and spoken only by the lower class, but took it into Court and cultivated it. His sons and his secretary became its protectors. This preparatory age gave place to the fourteenth century, one in which creative geniuses, were, like suns, scattering the thick fog of ignorance, and announcing the birth of a new era.

Dante was the first; and Petracea, Boccaccio, and several others followed his glorious career.

The fifteenth—a century of erudition—merely preceded the age illustrated alike for learning and literature. Princes vied with each other in protecting talent and genius. Thus the courts of the popes, of the kings of Naples and Sicily, and of all the petty Italian dukes, were open to this rising generation of science and learning.

Gioia, Panormita, Tilelfo, Paliziano, Pulci, Ariosto, Tasso, and many others, whose names it would be tedious to recount, lived as the favored guests of princes.

Money and honors were lavished upon these satellites, with a view to enhance the refulgence of the major planet. Still they belonged to the second class—the plebian. Society in Sicily presented in those times a very pitiable aspect. It was constituted as follows :

First, there was the class of the nobility; nominally subject to the king, but virtually independent; and tyrannical towards the common people. Secondly, the class of the people, subjects, and slaves to the first. This was the case in the country. In the cities the people were nominally free. They were the first to be represented in parliament; but as individuals, they were



in fact in the most abject condition, and were exposed to the greatest outrages at the hands of the powerful and licentious nobility. Third, an independent and arrogant clergy. Lastly, a king whose limited power relied on the support of the barons.

The Bourbon, Charles the Third, shook the incubus from his throne, and at a blow overthrew the feudal system. . This *coup d'etat* liberated the masses from the baronial thralldom, and gave rise to the formation of the third class of society. The men of science and learning, who as menials of the princes, had oftentimes to waste their powers on the unmerited praises of their masters, formed the nucleus of this new and rising class. To them were joined lawyers and physicians, who likewise were once the menials of the barons. The untitled proprietors, the cultivators of the fine arts, and in general all those who lived on the work of their mind, were as by common consent admitted to that class. Kings, out of policy, chose from from this class the magistrates, and all the most important officers; seeking to attract to themselves the most popular men with high salaries and court privileges. This glorious body by degrees vivified all the limbs of society which had been benumbed by aggression and superstition.

The nobility perceiving this new class sapping the very foundations of their influence, treated them—when they met—with cold bows and freezing looks obviously intended promptly to repel any attempt at familiarity of intercourse. With that pride of birth, so characteristic of old noble families, they regarded the men of letters as inferiors and intruders. Years passed on, and the educated class became the centre of social attraction. The nobility, except in court remained alone and were looked upon with indifference by the people. The new generation of the patricians, especially those who cultivated their minds growing with the heat of the century, and finding themselves isolated, threw off the impermeable cloak of rank, and stretched the hand of friendship to the third class. It was cordially received, with the grasp of brotherhood.



Now, among the youth, this distance has almost entirely vanished. Yet a small portion of the nobles, precisely those who are attached to the Court, keep intact their old demeanor, proud, haughty and distant. The educated class has become so powerful as to be dreaded as the terrible lever which will overthrow the thrones and proclaim a general brotherhood.

Tyrants may kill now and put in prison, but they can never fetter the most precious gift of God—the mind! Thus it was, that the young nobility were divided in opinion—some in favor of approaching familiarly the third class, and others of keeping in perfect seclusion.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### A NEW FRIEND.

WE had already begun the third year of the scientific course, and the fifth of our University studies, when one morning of vacation my friend Andrea came to my house. “What news?” I asked, after we had shaken hands.

“I came,” said he, in his usual lady-like manner, “I came to tell you of a new acquisition.”

“Some new books?”

“No. It is a young lawyer who took his laurea diploma of doctor last year, and now is preparing for law practice. He wishes to be a member of our society, and to be received as one of our friends.”

“Giuseppe will introduce him to us this afternoon at the Marquis of Z.’s when we take our fencing lesson.”

“But,” said I, “is he a trusty and safe person? Our position is delicate and dangerous. As President I must look to it strictly. This is said with regard to the society. As for



friendship it is another affair. We have been seven friends inseparable for almost eight years. Never an unpleasant word, never a misunderstanding has occurred among us."

"When you see him," answered Andrea, "you will not speak so. His name is Fabio. Oh, he is a very quiet, nice-looking fellow."

The same afternoon, after our fencing lesson, my friend Giuseppe introduced Signor Fabio Malvica, LL.D., with all due formality. He was a young man not above twenty-five years of age, rather tall and slender, with a slightly perceptible stoop. He had dark brown hair, small, pale face, thin, colorless lips, small, straight pointed nose, and round, small, dark hazel eyes. He was good-looking withal. No hair adorned his face, so that he had more the expression of a well-grown boy, than that of a young man. His countenance was mild and calm, though contradicted now and then by a quick movement of his keen bright eyes. He had a smile for each of us, if smile it may be called, the mere action of parting the two lips and showing a large rectilinear mouth adorned with two rows of beautiful teeth. He spoke in a low and distinct voice. His expressions were always measured, and his manners of a velvety softness.

At first, before I had any time to analyze his physiognomy, I felt in his presence an unaccountable discomfort, and instinctive repugnance.

Ettore treated us with some confectionery and sherbets; and after having discussed a cigar, the new associate—saying that he had some business of importance, withdrew, accompanied by his friend Giuseppe.

"How do you like him?" said Domenico to me when they had gone.

I looked at them all to read in their countenance the impression he had made on them, and not finding it encouraging, I did not answer.

"I wager my best sword that you like him not," said An-



drea. And Ettore subjoined, "You are used to be a little fantastic now and then."

"In fine, do you like him, yes or no?" said Antonio.

"Since you will know my opinion," said I, "I tell you frankly I do not like him. I know not why, but the moment I saw him I felt an unconquerable aversion."

"Poor fellow!" said Ettore, "I am sorry he has not met your fancy."

"You do me wrong," I replied with some vexation. "You know by experience that my first impulses have always proved correct in the end; and, secondly, I ask you if you have ever seen in me the least discourtesy towards those whom I have disliked at first sight?"

"Well, here you are with your long face," said Ettore. "Do you not perceive we are in fun? For the present he has been admitted to the society; as for friendship, we shall prove him first. No new friend shall be admitted amongst us if not approved by all. For my part, I believe him a gentle, brave, and learned gentleman."

It was the effect of the warm and impulsive temperament of my friend Ettore, that when excited he was prone to exaggeration. In the present case he spoke so highly of a person he had only known for half an hour, merely because he was pleased with him.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### LANGUAGE OF THE EYES.

THE Italians speak with their eyes. The eye is the tell-tale of fear, of imminent danger, of pleasure and sorrow, of confidence and mistrust, of approbation and disapprobation, of love and hatred.

When the tailor accompanies you to the warehouse to choose the finest cloth for your coat, he bows to the merchant. His glance means either, I want some cabbage, and the merchant imposes on you; or it means, dare not to impose on this gentleman, then you are well served.

You ask a person a question, and another present looks at the person spoken to with an air of seeming indifference, but he has said, trust him not. In a company consisting of disreputable people, one adduces, in confirmation of something untrue, the testimony of a friend present, and the friend attests the fact without hesitation, but the eyes say the reverse.

Many times it has happened to me in a *conversazione* or gathering of intimate friends of both sexes, that entering the room and glancing round at their eyes, I could perceive that they had spoken of me, and even what they had said. I have assured myself of this by cross-examining on the morrow the weakest of the company. Once, in this manner, I discovered a conspiracy against me by people that I had benefitted, and of whom I could not dream of any ill-will, and thereby was enabled to avoid the danger.

To counteract the language of the eye, other people have in-



vented alphabetical signs. But to express a word they must make several movements with their hands, and to make a sentence is a lengthy process. This manner of speaking, beside being very rude, raises the suspicion of the dullest.

The language of the eye is sometimes accompanied by a nod of the head or a slight movement with the hand ; oftener without even moving the eyes.

The origin of this galvanic speaking is historical, and reaches back to four centuries before Christ. Dyonisius, tyrant of Syracuse, had a large grotto cut out of solid rock in the form of an ear, eighty feet in height, and three hundred feet in length. This masterpiece of ingenuity corresponded on its immensely large scale symmetrically to the human organ. At the top of the rock there was a small room with a narrow opening for transmission of sound opposite the tympanum of this huge ear.

It is a known fact that the sound generally comes to the senses louder or lower according to the size and form of the ear when in a normal condition. Looking at this monster ear and calculating how many thousand times its size is magnified above the natural, one may infer how loud must have sounded at the top the words uttered inside.

Alas ! how often in time of tyranny the fruits of talent and genius are found to prove the bane of mankind.

This monument of ingenuity and skill was employed to gratify the cruel passions of a tyrant.

In that cave he chained all those whom he suspected of not being his friends. Those sufferers whispered their bitter feelings against the tyrant. The whispers came in audible words to the hearing of Dyonisius, who watched in the room at the summit. The next day the prisoners were butchered.

This monument still remains, but as some obstruction has been caused at the top by the hand of centuries, the sound instead of ascending re-echoes at the bottom. The movement of a sheet of paper resembles the sound of a coming storm. In a



short time this hideous contrivance was suspected by the citizens of Syracuse. The victims of the grotto forbore to open their mouths and, sharpening their wits during the time of their imprisonment, formed a language consisting of movements of the eyes, slight noddings of the head, and rarely a movement of the hand.

At the termination of their imprisonment they taught the new language to their friends and relatives, and in a short time it was widely spread, and not only prisoners in the cavern, but even those who walked in the street made use of that language ; so predominant was the fear of the tyrant !

With the advance of time, the language of the eyes gradually overspread the island ; and, as dress which was first invented by man to protect himself from the inclemency of the seasons, became at length an object of luxury ; so this language, invented by the dire necessity of escaping from the cruelties of Dionisius, became finally a language suited for amusement.

This manner of communication being common to all the Italians of Sicily, it could not be used to impart any secret in the presence of a third party. This want has been supplied by a skillful glance. No movement of any part of their body, not even of the eyes, is made, and the communication, electric-like, passes from one to the other. This requires wit and imagination in both parties, together with a knowledge of the thing spoken of. I will conclude this chapter by relating something in alliance with its subject.

In the first days of the revolution of Palermo in 1848, we had conquered all the positions held by the military in the city. The enemy was strong in the outside castles. One night, while making the round of the advanced posts I heard a subterraneous sound in the street, directly under me. It was something like digging with regular and methodical strokes. To raise an alarm would have been impolitic. I picked a dozen men from different posts under pretence of patrolling. I loitered with



my men near the spot. Towards dawn the noise ceased. The next day I called Julius Enea, a brave and intelligent young man, the leader of a squad of combatants. I related to him, in the strictest secrecy, my suspicions of a mine from the enemy, and charged him to inspect the place with his men immediately, adding, that if it was as I thought the best plan would be to furnish the squad with spades to dig a counter-mine, and if they should come in contact with the other men to fire upon them.

The revolutionary committee sat in the City Hall, acting as executive in the day-time, and as legislative body in the night. It was ten o'clock in the evening. We were discussing something important when the clang of a sabre was heard on the soft carpet. It was Enea. All the committee turned their heads and looked inquiringly at him, as if to ask if there was anything new; of this, however, he took no notice. He was a member of that body and had a right to sit amongst us.

Slowly he advanced with his arms folded on his breast, and placed himself standing behind the chair of a member of the assembly, just in front of me. The discussion continued. I looked at him and saw a peculiar, steady gaze. A little while after, I again directed my face towards him, and his eyes assumed an expression of uncertainty. A third time I looked at him with an air of determination, and he turned round and retired. His first look said, they are mining and advancing speedily, with the second he asked: what he had to do. Mine was the order to execute what I had said to him in the morning. None of the assembly had the least idea that we had exchanged communications. Now this very knowledge had served Fabio well to comprehend the position in which he stood.

As I said in the preceding chapter, my glances towards my friends, and theirs in exchange, although seemingly indifferent and practiced at different periods of our conversation, had not been lost on the man to whose character they were to apply. His acuteness of intellect led him to discover, firstly, the



good impression he had made on the company, in general, and my dislike for him, in particular. Secondly, he ascertained the ascendancy I had over my friends. Perceiving, thus, that I was not to be treated with neglect, and that he could not make himself the heart of the company without conquering my dislike for him, he laid his plans accordingly, to make this obstacle disappear.

In the progress of my narrative we shall see how he succeeded.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### TAKING THE WRONG WAY.

AFTER his introduction, Fabio was very assiduous in his visits to me. His manners were those of a gentleman. In a short time I forgot my first impressions regarding him. Once I said to Ettore and Andrea, on meeting them at the entrance of the university, that I found Fabio deserving our friendship, and I would fain recant my unfounded misgivings. "Eh!" said Ettore, "we know your weak side. You are very cautious; but, at the same time, outspoken and loyal, and we were sure that when you were convinced of his goodness, you would be the first to avow it. To-night, we go to the opera. My mother is indisposed, and I have the key of the box, we shall all be there, and Fabio will be one of the party. Do not come late. To-night the debut of a new Prima Donna takes place."

After the opera Antonio invited us to sup at a fashionable restaurant. There we spent the night in merriment, and the dawn of day found us at table. "What have we done," said I to my friends; "Be not so alarmed, my dearest friend," answered Fabio, in a mild manner; "once in a year such extravagances are permitted. Besides, we are young, and



must not wait for grim old age to enjoy ourselves. Youth is like a rose, if you pluck it not to-day when in blossom, on the morrow you will find only the stem."

All the company praised the wisdom of the speaker and departed for their respective homes perfectly sober. In that country the sight of a man intoxicated is a rare thing. The wine is strong, flavorful, and very cheap. But these things are not inducements enough to cause a man to become a toper. Wine is deemed by all classes as necessary as bread. Farmers' laborers have a measure of wine served to them every day besides their scanty wages. Good families teach their children how to drink a drop of wine the first time they come out of the nursery and sit at table. But they all instil in their education an abhorrence of drunkenness.

Once I saw a swarm of ragged striplings and urchins in a street, hooting after a man staggering with intoxication. Shame and sorrow were depicted on his countenance. Now and then he turned, flung a stone at the crowd, and reeled on. Yells and whoops increased, until a policeman came, dispersed the juvenile mob, and took the unfortunate man to the station house. I felt an interest in that man. He did not seem a dissipated fellow, though wan and haggard and with dilapidated habiliments. I went after him. He was a cabinet-maker who had lost his wife. She had died of a broken heart; because they could never learn what had become of their only son, who had been arrested by the police.

I went bail for him, and while lecturing him, he burst into tears saying, "Good sir, I have tried to drown my grief in wine, and I have reaped disgrace. How can I show my face in public any more!"

Two days after the night of our opera revel, Fabio invited us to a small party. The company was select, and we enjoyed ourselves till one o'clock. A disturbance occurred, which though of no account in itself, brought with it serious consequences. Domenico was in the act of beginning a quadrille,



when a young man approached, asking him politely to yield the place, as he had engaged the young lady for the first dance. With the same courtesy Domenico answered that he would leave the decision with the lady. The lady asserted that the engagement had been for a waltz and not a quadrille. Thus things remained as they were. The party over, Fabio invited us to supper in the restaurant as before ; where we passed another night of revelling.

Amongst other topics Domenico spoke of the affair of his quadrille and praised the breeding of the gentleman who asked his place. Fabio looked at him with his usual innocent-looking face, smiled, then turned to us with a twinkle in his eyes, saying :

“ Yes, he is a very nice young man. I know him very well.”

Domenico took the hint, and with a voice of thunder exclaimed :

“ What is it ? Has he said anything against me or the lady ? Speak out, or you are a false friend.”

Fabio smiled and calmly said, “ I have not heard him say anything.”

“ But who, who has spoken, you cold-blooded wretch ?” replied Domenico.

“ Well,” continued Fabio in his blindest and most insinuating tone, “ I abhor mischief-making—but I think it is nothing—I heard a fellow sitting near me say that your rival in the dance had used words a little disparaging of you. He did not repeat the words. I do not know this person, but I think he must be an intimate friend of his. Still, I do not believe what this man said. I know the other to be incapable of such behaviour. In fact, I reprimanded him.”

“ Yes,” thundered Domenico, “ that is the truth. The dastard did not dare to speak to my teeth.” He then thanked Fabio for having behaved as a true friend, and embraced him warmly.



Fabio smiled, and protested, with an assumed *naïveté*, that he did not believe what the fellow said, and that he did not know him.

It was five in the morning when we separated. Andrea accompanied me because he lived near my house.

“Our Fabio,” he said, whilst on our way, “our Fabio is a capital friend. He moves in the best society, and is esteemed by every one. See with what modesty he spoke of a great service he rendered to a friend. By the by, we have had two suppers, and it is right that we should each of us give one in turn. Let us enjoy our lives whilst young.”

Next morning Rosa came to awake me. “There is the marquis, who wants to see you in a hurry. It is eleven o’clock. You have lost your lessons several times. These bad friends of yours ! And your poor mother—the good lady weeps when you are out in the night.”

“How dare you ?” said I.

“Well, sir, I beg your pardon. It is for your good that I speak. I carried you in my arms when a babe, and your father too. The marquis is in great haste, sir.”

“Let him come in here,” said I, jumping out of the bed, and putting on a morning gown.

“We have an affair of honor,” exclaimed Ettore on entering. “Domenico met the gentleman of last night, and caned him. As a matter of course he will receive a challenge to-day ; to-morrow be on the field. Every one will speak of it. What glory ! This Fabio is a lucky fellow ; all the merit will be his. Of course he has the right to be the second ; none of us can contest it.

“And the law ?” said I in amazement.

“The law ?” replied Ettore, with an air of scornful surprise, “the law is for clowns. Have we not four or five duels per year ? You know very well that the police close one eye



so long as there is no death ; and for this we shall take measures. Oh, Fabio is a noble fellow !”

“ Still,” said I, “ I do not quite approve his conduct.”

“ Why, you astonish me,” said Ettore. “ Is not friendship a sacred thing ?”

“ Yes,” I replied ; “ for that very reason I withhold from him my approbation.”

“ What would you have done in such a case ?” said he.

“ I would have taken the matter upon myself. I would have called to account the person who related the affair, and thus ascertained the truth, and settled the matter honorably for my friend and for myself.”

“ Yes,” answered Ettore, “ you are right, but Fabio did not think of it at first.”

The next day the duel was fought. Domenico had a slight wound in his arm. Fabio regretted exceedingly having to decline being second, on account of business of importance. A reconciliation took place, three days after, together with a grand banquet, in course of which, Fabio was greatly commended for his friendship. The two rivals shook hands cordially. But Domenico’s antagonist denied openly having ever said a single word against his rival. The third party, who was said to be the cause of all this mischief, could not be found.

By degrees suppers became habitual at the restaurant. Hunting, fencing, dancing, boating, fishing parties, and mischievous pranks of every kind, in the evening, became an habitual pastime. Books were abandoned, and our names were not called any more in the daily roll of the University.

I will relate only two of our nocturnal deeds of mischief. One evening, not knowing what else to do, we resolved to break all the lamps of the Madonnas in the streets.

There are Madonnas and images of all kinds of saints at every corner of the city. Every saint, or Madonna, has a lamp that the poor people furnish with oil. Early in the even-



ing, the poor of the neighborhood used to gather about them, to chant the rosary. On the present occasion we went through the streets and broke a great many of the lamps. In some places several artisans came out to fight us, but we were eight good swords, and those who showed a strong inclination to chastise our scandalous conduct, made a virtue of necessity, and retired in good order. On another occasion, during summer, I went early in the evening to the chess-club. My friends were waiting for me. It was very warm. The mercury was at 80 degrees. It is warmest in the evening, as there is no breeze. From the club we went out to take a stroll. The poorer class of the people were seated, as usual, before their doors; some singing, some working. Here and there, placed upon a chair, there was a large dish of salad, composed of lettuce, cucumbers, onions and tomatoes, a bottle of wine, and close at hand a pitcher of water. On the pavement sat father, mother, girls, urchins and baby. Alternately they plunged their left hand into the dish, taking a handful of salad. A piece of bread in their right. They ate, they talked, they laughed; in short, they were happy. The father had earned enough that day to buy bread and salad.

On we went loitering through the narrow streets, looking at all those little groups without sympathizing with them. On a larger street, a concert, usual amongst the mechanics, was taking place. On one side of the street, shoe-makers, tailors and harness-makers were sitting before their doors. Upon a small, low table before them, were placed their tools, and a lamp shaded with paper. All were singing a ballad. One sang a verse, a solo, at the end of which the others sang in chorus. A new verse was then sung by the next man, and so on singing each one by turns. It was one of those popular, pathetic airs in minor key, which charm the senses. We sauntered along to the end of the row, laughing, making observations and exercising our wits at their expense. A cobbler,



the last of the row, was singing his part. He had a beautiful tenore voice, of which he was proud, and accompanied it with so many grimaces and contortions of face, that at the end of his performance we could not help bursting into a chorus of loud laughter

“Dogs and puppies,” exclaimed indignantly the offended Orpheus, “if you do not go I will break your bones.”

Ettore's noble blood boiled with rage, and drawing his sword, he sent the table, the tools, and the lamp tumbling on the pavement. This served us as a signal for battle, and we rushed to the attack. The artisans rallied. Shears, knives, chairs and tables were flourished in the air. We formed ourselves into a compact body, and made a strong resistance. Blows had been given and received, when a shoemaker, after having thrown at us his lasts and his lapstone, began to unpave the street, collecting stones in a pile. Observing that manœuvre, I perceived that the affair, began as a frolic, would terminate as a tragedy, and in haste I said to my friends, “Let us retire. We do not intend to kill any one nor to be killed, nor yet to have our names in the police books.” Thus receding slowly and in order before the enemy, we entered the gate of a large house, shut it in the face of our opponents, and from a back door emerged into another street. None of the parties were severely injured. The next day the police were in pursuit of us, but we were not discovered.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### A NARROW ESCAPE.

"LET us not go this way," said Fabio, one evening, as he was walking with me on a solitary road without the gate of Saint Antonino.

"Why not?" I asked; "the night is beautiful. Its calm aspect woos the mind to meditation. The moon shines with full splendor. A friendly breeze fans our brows, and the perfume of orange blossoms embalms the air. Let us go and sit on the bridge. The sound of the melancholy music of the waves placidly kissing the shore will soothe our spirits."

"You are romantic to-night," observed Fabio.

"There is something in me to-night," I continued, "which chills my heart and makes me feel gloomy. I do not know why, but when in this mood I always feel soothed in the contemplation of the works of creation. Look at the canopy of heaven. See how sublime is that dark blue sky, studded with millions of sparkling stars!"

Thus speaking we had arrived at the bridge. It is not however, exactly a bridge; a bridge denotes a construction intended for the passage from one shore to another, whereas this was a mere attempt at a bridge, without any just pretension to the name. A heavy tax had been imposed on the city, in years gone by, in order to throw a solid bridge over the river Oreto, just in front of the gate San Antonino which is at the end of the street Macqueda, one of the two which divide the city. Every one was glad to pay the tax for the improvement of the city.



Women teased their husbands for a new dress on the grand occasion of the opening of the bridge. Young ladies coaxed gouty papas to take them thither. Fastidious mamas looked archly at their betrothed daughters and threatened them with not allowing their lovers to accompany them.

Lady readers do not laugh at this. Every country has its own customs. In that country the young ladies are never permitted to go out but when accompanied by their father or mother. They are allowed moderately to go into society, but at home they do not receive any male friend or lover if not in the presence of their mothers.

Well: all at once the work on the bridge stopped. The king had need of money. To whom must the father apply when in need? Of course to his children. He did so. He took all the money from the bank. He promised to pay it with interest. Of course he will pay it some of these days. But the bridge? There it stands; only one arch.

Years passed, and the bridge remained unfinished. People talked about it, but they did not dare in those times to show anger. Lovers were disappointed and talked. Women lost the opportunity of getting a good dress, and talked. Fathers had to continue to pay the tax, and talked, till they talked themselves into forgetfulness. Still those times were preferable to the present, for one did not jeopardise his life by talking!

On the single arch of that bridge, were Fabio and I sitting on that beautiful night.

"Do you know what happened to me this morning?" said Fabio.

"Not until you tell me what it is," was my answer.

"This morning," he continued, "a ruffian insulted me, and he would have struck me if several persons had not interfered."

"What was it for?"

"A trifling cause," he added. "Not very far from this place there is a pleasant cottage with a flower garden in front. The



family that owns it, belongs to the vulgar class of wheat dealers. One day in passing by, I saw a beautiful girl. I remained for a moment fascinated on the spot. There is no harm in admiring any thing for its perfection. When she noticed my admiring attitude she pursed up her small voluptuous lips, fixed on me her glittering black eyes, and with a slow, queen-like step turned into the house. By chance I have passed by there every day since. She has shunned me. This morning she was gathering flowers and did not see me. When I was near her, as a matter of course, I asked a flower and told her she was beautiful. 'Sir!' exclaimed the haughty beauty, tossing her head as a person who feels indignant at the familiarity of another. Her cheeks turned scarlet, and with a vindictive tone she called out: 'Giubiano—my brother!' Then the fellow who answered to that name came out, and there happened what I related to you, but I assure you candidly I did not mean any harm."

"Would you marry her?" I asked.

He looked at me, smiled or rather slightly opened his mouth, and said quietly, "Absurd! A misalliance! Mine was only French gallantry."

"Fabio," I shouted, "where do you come from? Are you not a Sicilian? You do not appear to me the same to-night. You know very well the characteristics of our people. They are naturally generous, hospitable, good-hearted, staunch friends, but if you touch their women they become like tigers. You know very well that honor is a passion above all others. Life is of no value without it. French gallantry you say? You certainly mean French license!"

"With these ideas and disposition of yours," he replied, "I am afraid that if this fellow finds me here to night you would leave me alone. We had better re-enter the city."

I could not answer, I believed him in that moment beneath my contempt.



He arose and I followed.

We had scarcely gone twenty steps when we saw two men coming towards the bridge. They were rather stout, dressed in complete suits of dark velvet and fur caps.

When they drew near Fabio whispered to me with a trembling voice, "here they are." I had just the time to whisper in his ear, "be not afraid, I will stand by you," when they unsheathed two half swords, or long knives, and with the words "ruffian defend thyself," they made thrusts at Fabio. He put himself in a posture of defence, and I was quick enough to draw my sword and ward off a deadly stroke aimed at his breast.

The two men cried aloud with rage, and attacked me simultaneously.

At this moment, as by magic, I found I was left alone to defend myself against two infuriated assailants.

Fabio had seized the moment of my causing a diversion of his enemies, and stolen away under the arch of the bridge.

What was to be done in this predicament? I knew that two can stand against four, but one cannot against two. At a small distance behind me there was an ancient oak to which a city lamp was attached. Thither I retreated with a bound, and placed my back against the tree. My sword was longer and I could defend myself against two in front. I was cool because I trusted in my experience in fencing.

Like two famished lions they crossed their weapons against mine with a sharp clang. I carefully warded every stroke. More than once I had the opportunity to wound one of them, but I did not intend to shed blood. Only my tongue was bitter and my lips foamed thinking of Fabio. Ere long the swords rang with sharper clash, and the steel emitted sparks of fire.

The encounter had already lasted nearly twenty minutes without one of us being wounded. But I felt wearied, and knew that if my strength yielded I could not long stand their



assaults unharmed. In self-defence I had made up my mind to disable one of them at the first opportunity, when, welcome to my ear as the voice of an angel, an old woman was heard shrieking from a house in a garden near by, "The patrol—the patrol—the patrol." Immediately the stamping of horses' hoofs were heard. The two assailants, with a tremendous oath, took to their heels down through the arch of the bridge.

I had time to sheath my sword when six *gen d'armes* arrived at a trot.

"Where is the fighting?" asked the corporal.

"I don't see any fighting," I replied.

"But we heard the clashing of weapons at a distance."

"You may look forward," said I, "and perhaps you will arrive in time."

Overwhelmed with anger and disappointment, and unconscious of what I was doing, I directed my course towards home.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### REPENTANCE.

I ARRIVED at home overwhelmed with mingled feelings, impossible to describe. I sought my room, flung my cloak, hat and sword on the floor, locked the door, and throwing myself into a chair sat with my elbows planted on its arms, and supporting my forehead with my clasped hands. Of this, only a faint recollection remains. My brain reeled; I had no power of arranging my thoughts, all was chaos and distraction. I know not how long I remained in this state. Gradually I grew conscious of my position and gave way to a burst of grief attended with sensations of the most acute agony. Danger, misery,



debasement and dishonor, presented themselves before my eyes, as the end of the life I had begun to follow. The frowning image of my father arose slowly at the back of this picture, reminding me of his last warning. Filled with sorrow and compunction I dropped upon my knees, and with fervent prayers I invoked the orphan's father for help.

Full of trust I arose. Calm and determined I walked my room. The hurricane in my soul had abated. I took up my sword and unsheathed it; both edges were notched like a saw. I looked at it and with trembling hands I broke it across my knee. This single act told the entire story of my new life. Gathering the hat and cloak from the floor I rang the bell and unlocked the door. A servant answered the summons. "What is my mother doing?"

"She is in her room at present," was the reply.

"Well, retire."

Trembling, I repaired to her apartment and entered silently. My mother was kneeling on her *prie-dieu*; her face was pale, her palms joined, her head elevated, her eyes fixed on the crucifix, and her lips moved as if in deep and earnest prayer. Noiselessly I knelt beside her. She did not notice me until the word *Mother* passed my lips.

She turned to me—"my son."

"Mother bless me! Oh! bless me."

Startled, she exclaimed, "You alarm me, my son."

"Calm yourself mother, I am a changed man, and you shall find me henceforth a good and dutiful son." And here I confessed to her all my transgressions, not extenuating them by inculcating others. All this time my mother hung on my neck, shedding warm tears of joy. My story finished, "Let us pray, my son," she said; and we prayed; nay, she prayed. My heart was so full that I could scarcely follow her words with my mind. She ended with these words:

"Oh, my God! For the blessed blood of Jesus Christ, shed



on the cross in our behalf, pour thy blessings on this poor son whilst I do bless him with all my heart."

Thus saying, she rose up, and with a radiant countenance she laid both her hands on my head. Then, bending her head, she imprinted a warm kiss on my brow.

Oh! power of parental blessing. I had never felt so happy; never had my soul been so elated as it was now. Oh, unhappy children who have not been trained to obey, to venerate your parents, you will never experience such divine, consoling happiness! You will never pour in time of distress your heart of hearts into the ears of those who are your truest and most unexceptionable friends, and who will not deceive you, whose interest is their own; and you will never enjoy that solemn peace of mind and full content which I now felt!

Tired equally in mind and body, and freed from the incubus which oppressed my conscience, I slept that night a sweet and healthful sleep. At dawn I awoke, dressed myself, and remained for full two hours absorbed in meditation. Then I went into the library and collected all the long-abandoned books, wrote six notes to different addresses, and when the servant came in to announce breakfast ready, I ordered him to deliver them without the least delay.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

ALL IS FOR THE BEST.

THE evening of the day on which the event narrated in the last chapter occurred, as I was in my mother's room, I heard that six gentlemen waited to see me.

"Show them into the library, I will come soon," I said to the servant.

My mother looked at me with intense anxiety and a searching gaze, without uttering a word.

"Mother," said I, "I must not be selfish, what I am doing is for the best, and you will be so much the more pleased with me for that."

"May God bless and enlighten you, my son."

"Amen," I replied, taking her hand and kissing it with veneration.

Stepping into the library Ettore presented himself the first and said to me: "I received your note this morning, and as I stopped a moment at our chess-club I found that these boys had received a similar note from you," so we came together to see you.

"What is in the wind now? You look as pale as death," said Antonio, "is there any offence, any challenge to make?"

And Domenico: "Some missionary of the holy land has converted you, I wager."

And Andrea: "Be not worried, I know what it is. A love affair."



"Now seat yourselves," said I, with composure. "Please moderate your wonder. The affair of which I have to speak to you is of the most serious character." Collecting them about a large round table, I related the adventure of the preceding night. All eyes sparkled with fire, all lips were curved with contempt.

Onofrio exclaimed with a voice of thunder: "Let us erase his name from our club-list! Let us cane him in the promenade at noon, before the eyes of the ladies! The cur, the knave! Let us disgrace him," and other similar exclamations were uttered in concert by all the others.

"Calm yourselves, my friends," said I. "I know by experience the promptings of your noble hearts. But I have reflected and pondered on our false position; I have made an unalterable resolution; and if I gave you the trouble to come here to-night, it is from the affection I feel for you. I intend hereafter to resume assiduously my studies, and quit entirely every kind of sport."

"Impossible—nonsense—preposterous—ridiculous!" all shouted.

"We cannot do without you," said Ettore; "in all our frolics your foresight has always brought us out of mischief. Oh, that is impossible!"

"This very foresight you appeal to," I replied, "tells you that if we change not our mode of life, we are in danger of perdition."

"We have not, as yet," said one of them, who was the son of a baron, "committed any bad action; we are young, we have privileges above the rabble. The police do not dare to oppose us, or put a check upon our sallies. It seems that this world is made for us, and at our age we must make the most of it. Come, now, dismiss your sad thoughts, and let us be merry."

All the others remained silent, and I observed that Onofrio



wore a very serious countenance. This encouraged me to continue :

“ My friends, these very reasons have been the subject of my deep meditation. You all belong to rich and good families, whose revenues need the aid of no profession or office. I recollect your sentiments of two years ago. You longed for knowledge only for the sake of knowledge. You depicted wealth without learning as an ass loaded with gold. You lamented the brutal ignorance of many of the nobles. I heard with pleasure some of you saying *there is but one nobility ; that of the mind and of the heart. And one can reach it only by cultivating both.* And so indeed it is. Learning gives one the knowledge of himself, of his duties and responsibilities ; it makes him long to imitate the good and the brave ; not only to be called wise and upright, but to feel in himself that he is so in reality. On the contrary the ignorant and the wicked, though rich and powerful, are rendered miserable by the galling sense of inferiority, which they cannot escape, when brought into contact, or put in comparison with the wise and good. They may contrive for a little while to conceal from others their bad qualities, but they cannot hide them from themselves. No, my friends, the ignorant and the wicked cower before wisdom. These were your noble thoughts, I know, when you devoted yourselves to study. But, alas ! the insidious snares of our political organization have prevailed over us ; we have taken the bait, in neglecting the wholesome admonition of our conscience. Now let us take a survey of the state of society in our country. The majority are illiterate. They are kept so by the obstacles in the way of education. Our rulers know very well that ignorance is not to be feared. Apparently we have the best regulated public schools, and one of the best universities in Italy, whilst in reality they are nothing but a mockery ; for the poor are virtually excluded. They have laid, for our clogs, the perilous snare of connivance at irregularities,



in which folly, inexperience, and passions are involved, and the victims are brought to the level of the masses. In this state of distraction we are very seldom capable of finding the outlet of this maze, and retracing the noble path of virtue. Yes, my dearest friends, this impunity for our youthful sallies and outbreaks, this permission to carry weapons, to shoot, to fence, so strictly forbidden under heavy penalties to the poor, on one side makes the majority of the people naturally hate us, and on the other side keeps us far from the way to education, leads us into the path of dissipation and evil, and very often ends with dragging us down to a criminal life. Oh, yes, my friends, let us strip our errors of the veil of sophistry in which our inexperienced youth has wrapped them! Let us go to study again with might and main! Let us grow men of sterling integrity and strict probity! Let us value our reputation above all earthly things! Let us aspire to glory and renown! Let us take for a copy the lives of so many Italian heroes, and for our aim the regeneration of our poor, neglected, and oppressed countrymen!"

Their countenances were wan. I saw a strange, sorrowful expression in their eyes. All was still! I waited with intense anxiety for their answer; I watched their changing features with a searching gaze. The baron was the first to break the silence with the monosyllable, "yes,"—and all followed—"yes, yes—you are right—we will change—we will follow you."

A sudden flush of joy mounted to my brow. "Oh, my friends, how happy I feel! Henceforward we shall be inseparable in our studies, and our emulation shall be limited to our advancement, and to the performance of good actions. When the academical season is over, we shall have two full months to enjoy rest and all the innocent entertainments that the country offers.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### BISHOP IN PARTIBUS.

BEFORE speaking of a man whose noble qualities, both civil and religious, commanded respect, and to whom I owe an imperishable debt of gratitude, I propose to give a sketch of the history and character of the station in which he stood.

Bishop in Partibus (in the parts or lands of the infidels) is a station, or I should rather say, a title, created by the fecund genius of the Roman See, to mitigate in part the evils caused by the institutions of the middle ages.

The bulk of the patrimony of noble families was formerly left to the oldest son. He was bound to uphold the splendor of the same.

The younger sons, with the scanty pittance allotted to them, could not maintain the style of their class. Nurtured and trained with the same delicacy and luxury, they were doomed to double misery at the age of manhood.

Since the year 1821 the law has bettered the condition of the younger children. The father can give one half to the eldest son, and the other half to be divided in equal portions amongst all of them. But if the children are many, their portion is commonly very small.

The army and the church have been their resorts. As a man of noble blood shrinks from mixing with the common priests, the beneficence of the king and the graciousness of the Pope found the means for supplying this want. This is the



Bishopric in Partibus. Through Court influence, the king elects the bishop, and the Pope must needs approve it.

The reader will not take it amiss, I hope, if I deviate a little from my intended brevity, for the sake of explaining this matter.

The Popes have not quite the same power in Sicily that they exercise everywhere else. They cannot send there any apostolical Legate or Nuncio. The king acts as such by his own authority, and can don the pontifical habiliments if he wishes to discharge personally the Legate's office. A bishop is ordinarily intrusted with such functions, entirely depending on the king.

A court in which the Legate presides, called the tribunal of monarchy, decides all religious controversies. All the dignitaries of the church, from the curate to the Archbishop, are elected by the king. The pope has only the sanction of the choice.

On the occasion of a council—*concilo*—called by the Pope, it is in the absolute power of the king to choose the abbots and bishops to be sent to the council. This prerogative of the kings of Sicily dates as far back as the eleventh century.

Ruggiero the Norman, the brother of Robert Guiscard, after having freed Sicily from the Saracens, reinvigorated the Christian religion, which had suffered not a little during the time of their occupation. He founded churches and convents; instituted Archbishoprics, Bishoprics and Abbots, and made them large grants of real estate. Finally he withdrew Sicily from the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, and submitted it to the Pope of Rome. It is natural that Ruggiero, as the founder and patron of the churches of Sicily, should wish to be its exclusive judge in all contentions. So in consideration of such valuable services rendered to the church of Rome, Pope Urban II, awarded the above named privileges in a bull dated July 5th, 1099.



These prerogatives were energetically sought in behalf of England by William the Norman, and caused many contentions between his successors and the Archbishops of Canterbury, but were obstinately refused to them.

The succeeding Popes felt scandalized at this concession made to Sicily, and tried to withdraw what they called this *unrightful authority*, but the princes firmly upheld their claim. At different periods the popes drew the sword to reconquer those alienated rights, but they were all defeated, and once Pope Leone IX was made prisoner, and held in durance for one year in Benevento. Ruggiero, and Frederic the second, for this cause led their armies victoriously to the gates of Rome.

Let us now return to the Bishop in Partibus. The aspirant receives a parchment with the seal of the Fisherman. And in this he has the pleasure of reading his name, as the bishop elected for the diocese of Tripoli, or of Palmyra, or any other place inhabited by infidels. Accompanying this diploma there is a pastoral letter, inculcating on the bishop to go forthwith to his destination, as soon as the place shall be under the jurisdiction of the pope. Still he remains an isolated man. He does not join with the common priests because he has no authority over them, and as an equal he will not. For the same reason the common priests do not care for him. Other dignitaries of the church have no contact with him.

Thus the Bishop in Partibus has no sympathy with the whole hierarchy for weal or woe.

Once upon a time the church exercised an overwhelming power, which was wielded now in favor of the barons, then in behalf of the king, and often to call in a foreign usurper, according to the ambition of the popes. But internally, the church was not consolidated in those times. The priests, the monks, and the jesuits formed three sects, studying always to put down each other; and whilst all were triumphant in mass, bit-



ter feelings, jealousy and disagreement gnawed at their hearts.—But the Bishop in Partibus did not participate in either.

The clergy possess one third of the real-estate, and jewels enough to buy a kingdom with their value ; but the Bishop in Partibus do not see a single penny of it.

In the dark ages the abbots and friars were the sole depositories of the remaining sparks of learning. But, when by degrees, there sprang up the new class in society called the third class, that of educated men, which was destined to light the torch of knowledge and dissipate ignorance ; the clergy saw at a distance the gathering clouds, which would bring the hurricane, destructive of their power—And they employed the inquisition to annihilate the growing adversary.—But the Bishop in Partibus stood aloof.

Years have passed upon years, and from the ashes of the *Auto da fe* generations have arisen after generations, and the thrones of the tyrants shake, and the prestige of the clergy is quite enfeebled.

Seeing the imminent shipwreck, the pope with all the hierarchy, jesuits and tyrants have cordially joined in one feeling to save themselves from destruction, but the Bishop in Partibus does not care for it. Thus kept isolated from the hierarchy he is free from its thralldom. And in his privacy he can follow without open transgression the dictates of his conscience.



## CHAPTER XX.

### BISHOP D.

My friend, Bishop D., was one of those mentioned in the preceding chapter. He was Bishop of . . . . Unfortunately, he could never go to take possession of his diocese and the rich lands belonging to it. Of course, lands and dominions go before everything. Bishop means power, and how can a man exercise power without domains? But Bishop D. was an exception, and I have seen many of these exceptions. He was a thoroughly learned man—a philosopher. His manners were plain and unostentatious; but he was not quite exempt from that pride of birth so characteristic of most of our older families; although his nature was bitterly repugnant to any thing which had the appearance of tyranny.

His income was sufficient to allow him to live comfortably, and with many luxuries of private life; but he appropriated the means that would have supplied the latter to deeds of charity.

He was perfectly satisfied with his episcopal, heavy, antique carriage drawn by two mules—mules are thought stylish for bishops in partibus—and attended by two decrepit creatures, one before on a high seat, and the other standing behind, keeping his place with great difficulty by the aid of two hanging leather straps.

His household consisted—besides the two medalions we have



seen on the carriage—of a house-keeper, tall and stiff, with red hair and a pair of gold goggles always on her nose. This article consisted of four glasses ; two clear, placed before the eyes, and two green, situated laterally.

This maiden lady had a niece, rather pretty, whom the bishop had educated in every accomplishment. She sewed, embroidered, and acted as the bishop's secretary, book-keeper and cashier. In addition, there was the son of the mummy, who stood behind the carriage—a genteel-looking man of thirty—who performed the duties of agent, and valet on occasions : the son of the coachman—a sturdy-looking fellow—acted as a stable-boy, and his sister—a widow—as a chamber-maid.

The most interesting and remarkable of the household was the cook. He was a stout, round man, but his legs were one-half short of the regular proportion. He had a red face and nose, small black eyes and a bald head. He was active and nimble as a squirrel, and as lively as a monkey. He was much valued by the bishop for his skill in the culinary art. All these people had a profound veneration for their master.

The bishop's religious feelings were of a high order. When he spoke of Jesus, his countenance was like that of one inspired—his eloquence had no bounds. He believed in the Eucharist, but of aught below that he never troubled his mind to think. No statuettes or painting of saint were seen in his mansion. Only that in the bed-room he had a large ivory crucifix hanging on the wall at the head of his bed, and a small medal of the Holy Virgin suspended under the Cross. Bishop D. never was in the habit of speaking of religion. He never showed any outward ostentation, but in his house he was a strict disciplinarian, and the Sabbath was religiously observed. He said the mass in his own house, and for that day it was converted into a sanctuary of prayer.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### REFORMATION.

AFTER the day on which we resolved to break off our course of dissipation, my friends and I resumed our studies with the same earnestness as before.

I had, for the period of a year, forsaken the bishop's house. My heart now yearned to go, but I felt ashamed. One day I nerved myself and went. Arriving at the gate of the mansion, before entering the courtyard, I looked in timidly; my heart palpitated. There was the stable boy singing with a bucket in his left hand, throwing water with his right on the legs of the mules.

"Is the bishop in?" I asked.

"Yes, sir," he answered, and continued his song.

Up I went by the large stairs. In the servants' hall there was the valet singing while in the act of cleaning silver plate.

"Where is the bishop?" I asked. He stopped singing long enough to say, "in the library," and then resumed his song: "please, announce me to his eminence," I said.

He looked at me in astonishment.

"For you, sir, there has never been any necessity of announcement; but if you wish it, I go, I go, I go," he said, continuing the tune of his ballad. The chamber maid crossed the hall and bowed without interrupting her song. Immediately the valet returned, and in the same tune interrupted before, said: "be so kind, sir, as to step into the library."

More to tarry a little and gather courage than anything else,



I said : " Pray, John, do you always carry your messages in music ?"

" I beg your pardon, sir," he answered, mortified. I have known you so long—ever since you were a child—and I took the liberty. But, what can I tell you, sir ? We poor servants in working hours have the recreation of singing whilst we work. You gentlemen have no need of it, and still—don't you sing in the house, don't you always hum something when you walk—listen, sir—even Miss Giulia is singing, whilst embroidering the gold stole of his eminence, and she is a refined young lady. Even her aunt hums sometimes a solemn tune. The difference, sir, is only this : big folks sing opera airs, and we ignorant people sing our beautiful ballads that touch the chords of the heart."

This sally of the good John had given me time to gain composure. " You are right, John," I said, walking towards the library.

The bishop of —— was sitting in a large arm chair, covered with red damask. Open before him on a round table lay a huge volume. As I entered he raised his head, took off his spectacles, and smiled to me calmly, and with a much kinder expression than any he had ever bestowed upon me.

I remained for a moment speechless at the other end of the table in front of him. I could read a deep sorrow in his calm eyes. My ardent, sensitive nature would never submit to a schooling by any man. This feeling has always prompted in me a strong desire to act well and fulfil my duty.

But I had gone there for atonement, and in a low husky voice I asked : " how is your health, Monsignore ?"

Smiling he answered : " I have been very well all this year, thank God."

The stroke came straight home to my heart : I felt nervous, but I said to myself : I deserve it, then casting my eyes down I said with compunction,



“Monsignore, I have been a wicked ungrateful creature, but I have repented.”

The venerable old man arose, opened his arms, and with a tear trickling down his cheek said, “Come to my arms.”

He forced me to remain to dinner. His invitations for dinner were generally expressed in the words, “*Come and do penance with me.*” And it was a penance indeed. Monsignore was not a gourmand in the proper sense of the word, but he liked delicate dishes, and his glistening-faced cook in this branch of his art might serve the turn of Lucullus.

All that day his conversation rambled on indifferent topics.

“By the by,” he said after dinner, “what books have you at present to read in your hours of relaxation?”

“I intend to read the Bible thoroughly.”

“Can you get any?” he asked with a mirthful look.

“I have one,” I replied.

“How! Who gave it to you?” he said, his face becoming a shade more serious.

“An American captain gave it to me.”

He compressed his lips, and looked through the open window into the garden. Anon he turned his eyes, gazed at me, and then turned his eyes again into the garden.

I could perceive on his brow that some contending thoughts were at war in his mind. After a while he turned to me with a bright glance and said:

“Yes, my son. That is the book of truth. Study it—but on one condition—that you will study coterminously another book, which will smooth the way for understanding the Bible. Please take that large book in folio, the first on the lower shelf. It contains the lives of the fathers of the church in Latin. You will find in it a treasure of knowledge.”

I thanked him, and went home happier than ever, carrying with me that heavy treasure.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### AN UNTRUSTWORTHY CHARACTER.

THERE is a class of men in this world who are born for mischief, live in mischief, and rejoice in mischief. They naturally abhor mankind. Self is their exclusive idol, envy their moving power, hypocrisy their prime minister. Their highest ambition is mischief. They are tyrants more worthy of the name than those born to royalty. Kings have brute force. They can torture and kill without hinderance, and without resort to high intellectual faculties; but the power of the mischief-makers consists in hypocrisy, cunning, and acute intellect. They kill morally by using exaggerated praises and small reticences, which are worse than open slanders. They contrive always to act so as never to be suspected as the authors of the evil.

They have no religion of their own. In Rome they kiss the Pope's toe with a seeming veneration; in Turkey they worship Mahomet, and declare war against the Christians; in India they adore the Sun, the Moon, and idols, and in America they are strict puritans. They practice all the winning ways which serve to make them popular. They look as meek as lambs, whilst in reality they are as proud as Lucifer.

No one who is not initiated in the mysteries of human nature and in the study of physiognomies can suspect these characters. They manage with adroitness to keep others in the foreground of mischief, so that if discovered the odium falls not on them. They belong to the reptile genus, but their



species is not of the rattlesnake who warn you to avoid their way, but of the boa who charms you in order to make you a certain prey. Their masterpiece of workmanship is the perfection of their mask, a work of a life time. But the burden of their lives is heavy to carry. They are, of course, mean and cowardly, and their days are forever oscillating between the two extremes : fear of a discovery, and unlimited expectation of success ; triumph and utter despair. Their greatest grievance is the happiness of others. Such was our friend Fabio.

Out of regard to our own dignity we had not published his disgrace. The most severe punishment to inflict on a man of proud feeling is indifference. Fabio continued with his calm, quiet manners to insinuate himself everywhere ; to impose on the credulity of the people ; to win undeserved esteem. He continued to attend the chess-club ; he spoke highly of us, and particularly of me.

Once a member of the club, a pleasant old gentleman, speaking of Fabio, said to me : " This man is unfathomable. He seems to me a riddle ; he never speaks ill of any one, and when he praises a person he does it in such a way as to leave in my mind a shadow of suspicion or of unfavorable sentiment towards the person spoken of. We fortunately know in Palermo each other very well ; but to a stranger or a foreigner his praises would create a general dislike for the person praised. It is a great pity that he employs his bright talents in such mean devices. I am strongly tempted to believe that he is the Napoleon of hypocrites."

I did not give any answer. The fact was that Fabio had succeeded in gathering a party of young men and in making himself its head and soul. We perceived by the faint reserve of those young men that Fabio was brewing mischief. But on account of our firm determination to lead a quiet and gentlemanly life, and in order to thwart his scheme of giving us



trouble, in exchange for our indifference, we resolved to forsake the club. Hence came the question: "What to do with ourselves?"

"My friends," said Antonio, "we are now of an age that enables us to acquire a knowledge of the world; therefore it is reasonable that we make our debut in society. But we must contrive to manage the affair so as not to cause our disunion. It is a great help in the social career to have true friends, ready to aid each other with counsel and assistance."

"I have it," said Ettore, who all this time had been musing, twisting his moustache with an air of deep concern, "I have it! On Thursdays we have vacation; therefore on Wednesday evening we have no lessons to prepare. This shall be the time to devote to society. And to begin, we shall introduce each other to our respective families."

"But," said Onofrio, "Domenico and I cannot do anything in that way on account of our families living at a distance."

"We shall pay it with usury," said Domenico, "because we invite you now in advance in a body for the months of May and October to our country-places, and there you will be the idols of our beautiful maidens."

"I think it is all settled," said Ettore, "and as everything must have its beginning, I now ask all of you to be present next Wednesday evening, at eight o'clock, in full dress, at my mother's house, to witness the affecting ceremony attendant upon the entrance into the world of seven wonderful coxcombs."



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IN SOCIETY.

THE next Wednesday was a day of excitement for me. It was a new phase in life that I had long desired, but now that I was in the act of tasting the coveted fruit, I was afraid to touch it. Was it shyness? I was not coy by nature. I suspect that it was self-esteem. The thought that perhaps they would find in me something amiss or something awkward, made me extremely nervous. Dressing was my passion. My mother not only had not tried to check it, but had even seconded my most trifling fancies. My toilet was always irreproachable, though simple. To wear anything which did not fit me to a nicety was out of the question. Alas! How much had I to suffer in future times!

The hair-dresser came. My black curls were set off to advantage. My toilet was completed in full black, with white vest and cravat. Whilst waiting for a carriage I gave it the last survey. I placed myself before a mirror, and examined minutely if my hair, or the points of the cravat, or the breast-pin, or the chain, was geometrically arranged, until I started for my destination.

The Marchioness T. was a lady of five and forty, with a light complexion and beautiful form. She had soft blue eyes and a commanding aspect. Her manners were amiable and condescending. The Marquis T. was tall and stout, with dark complexion and curly hair. He looked haughty, but when he spoke, one forgot the first impression he had received, so kind and amiable he could appear when he chose.



Ettore introduced me to his parents, with the flattering expressions, "My best, my worthiest friend."

They had invited a select party for that night; and a number of ladies and gentlemen were already there.

The great hall, magnificently decorated and furnished; the quantity of people dressed exquisitely and sparkling with diamonds; the immense light poured by hundreds of wax candles, all combined to bewilder and abash me. My courage was gone. I was just like an actor who finds himself on the stage for the first time, and at the rising of the curtain forgets his part, and loses the command of his faculties. All the elegant expressions I had prepared were gone, and I wished that the earth would open and swallow me.

The marchioness saw my embarrassment, and with a sweet smile came to my relief. She took my cold hand and shook it in an unceremonious manner; that is to say, instead of giving the tip of her tapering fingers to touch, she shook my hand cordially, saying,

"I am glad to make your acquaintance. My son has a great esteem for you. He has told me many things; and I take this pleasant opportunity to express to you that the friendship that my son professes for you is shared by his father and mother."

The kindness of the marchioness made my blood circulate freely, and restored me again to my natural state of mind. I thanked her in a polite manner. Having overcome the first difficulty, I retired into a corner to make observations.

What struck me first, was to see the freedom and ease every one felt.

Jealous husbands, frowning solicitous mothers disappeared in that place. I expected to see a great deal of constraint, but instead, I saw that after complimenting the marchioness and the marquis, ladies and gentlemen pursued their own pleasure among their friends and acquaintances.

It was beautiful to see so many ladies sparkling with ele-



gance and beauty, conversing with a mixture of liveliness, dignity, and ease, and talking to gentlemen they had never before seen.

The different colors of their dresses, and the *tout-ensemble* of every lady, made the groups appear at a distance like bouquets of flowers, which, as if by magic, changed their shapes and their colors every few minutes. Whilst thus looking and wondering, I saw Ettore, with his father, coming from a tour round the galleries. They came near me, and the Marquis said:

“What are you doing in this corner?”

“I am looking and thinking.”

“Have you been round to speak to the ladies?”

“How can I do it?” I said; “I am not acquainted with any one. I do not feel rude enough to intrude myself on ladies. The single idea of disapprobation would kill me.”

“You are very unsophisticated,” said the Marquis, with a smile. “In assemblies and parties there is no need of any introduction. It is thought as a matter of course, that none but honorable and well-bred people are admitted. In fact to introduce a friend in a family or in a party, without the previous permission of the lady of the house, is quite forbidden. Hence, the freedom from restraint and formality that you observe in the ladies. You may approach a group with a bow, they smile to you with kindness, and soon ask your opinion on what they are saying. They feel sure, that being under this roof, you cannot but be a gentleman. When the group dissolves you do the same, but do not follow the same persons. Thus going round you may ask the favor of dancing with some lady, if she has no engagement.”

“Would you do me the favor to introduce me to some of these ladies?” said I.

“That is out of the question,” he answered; “they would not comprehend the meaning of my introduction. Personal introduction, by implying particularity, would implicitly cut off the



one introduced. What would become of the gayety of our societies," he continued, "if people should be introduced personally? In this case you would see a large party divided into a few groups of acquaintances, and a number of wall flowers. Or perhaps the lady of the house going round performing the tedious duty of introducing every new comer to all the company. And when weary—of course she must soon become tired—the newly arrived guests must remain isolated, or attach themselves—like remorse to the sinner—to some acquaintance. Now let us imagine a formal introduction. Out of civility you should say a few words to the person introduced. You do not know the person, his business, his relations, his education, and his feelings. What would you say? You are at a loss. You are reduced in that moment to the dilemma, either to fall into the vulgarity of speaking of the weather, or to be as awkward as one not able to say a word. On the contrary, with this familiarity the ladies give you the opportunity of showing your talent and wit by inviting you to speak on a subject already in discourse. As a matter of course you get information about them afterwards. They will do the same about you—have no doubt of it. The second time you meet them you ask about their health, and you are able to find a congenial topic to make yourself agreeable."

"I thank you, sir Marquis," I said, "but since you have been so kind as to unravel to me the mysteries of society, would you be so good as to explain to me how it is, that jealous husbands and very strict mothers do not watch their wives and daughters, surrounded by so many elegant young men?"

It may be well to state here that in my inexperience I had formed notions of our society from the books of foreigners, so-called travellers in Sicily; books full of anachronisms and absurdities.

The Marquis gazed at me from head to foot with a scanning



look. He seemed as if he would measure and weigh my person.

Soon after, he shrugged his shoulders and said with an air of patronising benignity :

“ What you want to know is an explanation of the character of our people. We are known abroad as a jealous people. But, far from being so, we are only wise. Few travellers come here, and those few stop for eight days or a fortnight ; go round the streets conversing with some policeman, visit the surrounding country, asking questions of the driver, sit in the *caffés* talking with a few debauched young men ; then go away and write large books on our morals, customs, and habits. But never mind what the foreigners say. What I am going to explain to you will show you the wisdom of the first introducers of such a custom.

“ Woman is naturally frail. Mankind are wicked. To arrive at their end bad men, assuming fictitious characters, begin first by corrupting the natural morality of women. All this cannot be achieved without free intercourse. To avoid mischief, unrestrained intercourse is forbidden. On the contrary, in a chosen society they have absolute freedom. No one is admitted in a respectable house if not found a true gentleman. Woe to the young man who trespasses in the least. The house in which there happens a disturbance of the smallest degree is not thought respectable any more. This shows plainly that we do not mistrust our women, only we contrive to keep them safe from certain contamination.”

“ But,” I said, “ is it not a kind of slavery ?”

“ No, my friend,” he answered. “ Slavery is deprivation of liberty. Our ladies are quite free in their daily actions. But to be accompanied by their parents, or husbands, or a servant, for the married ones, is a practice which has been engrafted on their minds since their childhood, as belonging to propriety, so that far from being felt as a burden, they are proud of it,



and they claim it as a conveniency. Do you know who cry out against this use? The bad ones, and all those swarming vagabonds of the world who find in it a barrier to their execrable wishes. The French, for this very purpose call us uncivilized, forgetting that we dictated civilization long before they ceased their druidical bloody sacrifices. I wish they had never contaminated poor Italy."

Perceiving that the marquis was no admirer of the French, I made bold to observe, "I think that the French improved the state of Italy in their last occupation."

"They caused good and evil," answered the marquis. "By their example they stirred the people into action: they broke the prestige which surrounded the kings, and showed practically that the people are stronger than tyrants. Finally they brought a sensible amelioration on public administration and on the laws.—This as a Nation. As individuals the French pillaged Italy, used every kind of cruelty, and demoralized the natural innocent customs of the Italians. I will relate to you only one anecdote. In Cosenza the brilliant French officers were at a loss how to be introduced to the company of ladies. Their licentiousness had closed to them the doors of all honest families. They were incensed. They could not have a *soirée dansante* for lack of ladies, . . . well, do you know what they did? . . . they arrested one score of respectable gentlemen, who had beautiful wives, and took the ladies by force to the ball room.

"After that time the husbands were compelled to become complaisant, and the women lost that chaste reserve, so sweet and unappreciable in our ladies. Oh, I am so glad that they did not arrive to pollute our land."

I did not answer.

A few minutes after he said,

"Let us adjourn to the dining room, and you Ettore lead the way for your friends."



I will not enlarge on the elegance of the room, and the sumptuousness of the table. When I entered I found a crowd of people. "Now," said Ettore, "is the time to put in practice all your elegance of manners. We must make ourselves useful, waiting upon the ladies. I leave you to do your best. Try to make yourself conspicuous."

So saying he left me. Conscious of my inexperience I held back abashed. The sight of so many exquisites going round, and gallantly waiting on ladies, made me miserable beyond conception. I burned to emulate them, but an inexpressible feeling of diffidence kept me back, when a young lady, nay an angel of beauty turned to me. In a bewitching manner she said :

"Would you be so kind as to hand me a glass of ice?"

That voice which sounded in my ear like music broke the spell, and urged me on to action. My timidity vanished ; my constraint was over. I felt just as lively and as unconstrained as when I was with my merry friends.

To my credit, be it said, I managed that night so adroitly as to wait attentively not only on the lady who honored me, but even on all those who surrounded us. In after times I looked at that beauty as my protecting star.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT.

THE *soirées* we had on the succeeding Thursdays at Antonio's, Giuseppe's, and Andrea's, though not as sumptuous as that of the marquis, were splendid indeed. I introduced my friends to my mother, who, pleased with our changed behavior, received them with kindness and unaffected cordiality. My sister was at that time in a convent, to receive her education. I studied the whole week; but the Thursdays I enjoyed to my heart's content. I had not seen Bishop D. since he had given me the large volume to read containing the lives of the fathers of the church. I was ambitious to go to him thoroughly informed of the matter. Therefore I occupied all my spare hours in acquiring the interesting knowledge of the early times of our religion, and the exemplary lives of the Patriarchs of the Church. I read the book to the last page, with the greatest delight. According to the bidding of the bishop I had not, hitherto, perused the Bible. One evening I felt one of those slight indispositions which induce an unaccountable sensation of gloom and despondency. It was August. The sky was overcast. The air was sultry, impregnated with electricity. The refreshing breeze that seldom fails in that climate, was quite absent. After a little moody conversation with my mother, I asked her blessing to retire. It is customary there, for the children, whatever be their age, to ask their parent's blessing in the morning when they arise from bed, in the evening before



retiring, at the beginning of every meal, in going out and in coming home.

"What is the matter with you, my son?" asked my mother, bending on me a glance, which was expressive at once of love, fear, and interest.

"Nothing, my dear mama, only I don't feel in good spirits. It is better for me to go to bed."

"It is the effect of the weather," answered my mother, "we are going to have a storm; well, good night, my son, God bless you."

I rose slowly, kissed my mother's hand, and she kissed my forehead in return.

Entering my room, I threw myself on an arm chair and looked through the open window. Suddenly turning my head, my eyes caught sight of a little book placed on the corner of the table within reach of my hand. It was the bible the American captain had presented to me. Mechanically I took it and suspending it between the thumb and the first finger of my left hand, just as if putting it between the two points of a convex compass, I began with the first finger of the right hand to give to it an oscillating motion. I did not intend to read, for I had neither the feeling nor the energy for doing so. I was enjoying the sweet pleasure of doing nothing—*il dolce far niente*. Yes, it was that *dolce far niente* about which foreigners make a great ado, and translate it *idleness*.

There are some hours, on hot days in that sunny climate, in which man feels powerless both in body and mind. If compelled to work, his overcharged nerves become irritable. On the contrary, rest gives a feeling of ineffable pleasure. It bathes the soul with such a sweet languor, that no other enjoyment in the world can induce one to break it. If the tourist who observes the laborers or mechanics enjoying the *dolce far niente* in the hours of rest, would employ the time necessary to study a country, and see how energetically those very men work in their vocation, they would never again sneeringly use



*il dolce far niente* as a soubriquet for habitual indolence in the Italians.

To return to my subject: After a little while I opened the book at random. My sight fell by chance on the fourteenth verse of the twentieth chapter of Exodus. I read it, and something struck my mind. Concentrating all my attention, I perused it again with alarm. Once more I read it, commencing from the beginning of the chapter. I felt thunderstruck. The discovery took me quite by surprise, and I was not proof against it. I rose, walked up and down the room, and muttered, "Is it possible that they have altered, falsified, the commandments of God? No, this is impossible. What interest could they have had in doing so?" I read over again, and there it was, the truth staring at me. "Thus the priests teach not the truth," I continued. "If they garble the very commandments, the foundation of our religion, what would they not falsify? Then I have been a plaything, a dupe. What is religion then? I will not believe anything at all." At this moment a flood of light flashed into the room, followed immediately by a tremendous peal of thunder. I remained stupified for a few minutes. It is not to be wondered at, that with such a state of mind, agitated, confused and disordered, the unexpected flash and the crash of thunder, made me feel as if the Almighty would have punished me for the words I had uttered.

It must be considered that I had been brought up in the belief that the pope was infallible, that the priests were holy men, and that their words were Gospel.

The continual pouring for many years of their schooling into a candid and credulous heart and into a mind with a natural bent for religion, had made of me a blind believer and a strictly devout young man.

This was the first disappointment in my life, and terribly I felt it. I was shocked at myself for having been so weak as to mistrust the priests. "It must be a mistake in the bible," I tried to persuade myself, "And if the book is right!" Some-



thing supernatural compelled me to believe that the book was right. Oh ! I was miserable beyond conception.

The storm that raged outside was inconsiderable in comparison with the hurricane raised in my heart by the conflicting thoughts. Strong in the belief of priest-teaching, I looked to the hereafter with the greatest confidence.

I had learned from the old philosophers, that death was but repose sweetened by virtuous actions.

According to the teaching of our Saviour, I thought death to be the ineffable joy of contemplating face to face the first cause of all things ; the immortal Principle of all goodness and perfection. This was my idea of death. With such sentiments, death was not an awful thing for me ; nay I wooed it as a blessing. The only point was to deserve such blessings by an exemplary life.

But this belief arose from faith, which had its roots in a blind confidence in the priests and their words.

The new discovery damped my faith, mistrust superseded it, and unbelief followed. As a natural consequence, finding the priests false in one thing, I thought them false in every thing. All my castles of future happiness crumbled into nothingness. In my utter despair, I believed in nothing. Religion, I thought, is an invention of crafty men to enslave the ignorant. This frenzy subsiding, old habits gained the upper hand. Priests awfully grinning, stared at me, pointing with outstretched fingers down, down, down into the abyss of perdition.

Fits of terror seized upon me. I saw all my hopes of salvation cut off in the bud, all my future blasted.

It was all the work of a diseased imagination. I felt as a pilot who has lost compass and rudder in a storm in the midst of a long voyage.

When this harassing paroxysm had in some degree passed, Bishop D. recurred to my mind. I knew he was a noble and honest man, and I thought that he alone could set things to



rights in my conscience. Still the conflict of hope, doubt, despair, kept me awake all night.

How long was that night! How slowly the clock marked the hours.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### HOW EASILY EXCITED!

NEXT day I put the bible in my pocket, and went to Bishop D. I found him reading in the library.

"How do you do, my young friend?" he said, extending his hand.

"Thank you, Monsignore," I answered, taking a seat near him, for my legs could scarcely carry me. "Will you give me leave, Monsignore, to ask you some questions?"

"Certainly," he answered. "But what is the matter with you to-day? You do not look like yourself."

I did not answer the question. All my emotions re-awakened in my heart in full strength. Slowly I drew the bible out of my pocket, and handing it to him, I asked, "Is this the right bible?"

"Of course it is," he returned, staring at me with astonishment.

"Is it from this book that you teach the precepts of Christianity?"

"Certainly it is."

Hearing this my temper reached its culminating point, and with a husky, hissing voice, I said, "Then I will not believe any more in anything you say or teach; it is all mummery."

In my transport of passion, I could not reflect that the word—you—was directly offensive to the good Bishop, for it seemed



either directed at him alone, or to confound him with the class of the clergy, on which subject he was very sensitive. He thought I was crazy. With contracted brow and compressed lips he looked me steadily in the face. Then with a trembling voice, said :

“ Sir, will you be so kind as to explain the meaning of all this ? ”

I opened the bible and with my finger pointed at the 14th verse of the 20th chapter of Exodus, and read it aloud. “ Then,” I continued, “ the priests have changed this. This change makes the commandment a mockery. Is any one permitted to trifle with the commandments of God ? ”

“ Now, please tell me sir, which is true, which is untrue say, is there any thing true ? ”

I stopped because my feelings almost choked me, and hindered the power of utterance.

The countenance of the bishop, from being haughty changed into one sorrowful and pitiful. He could perceive that the conflicting character of my emotions had excited a storm in my bosom.

He gazed at me for several minutes with compressed lips, as if in deep thought, now and then nodding his head as if answering to questions, his mind was dictating.

A little while after he said with a sad tone of voice, as if thinking aloud ; “ I am old—my web of life is nearly spun—falsehood never sullied my mouth. My friend, this book is the book of wisdom and truth—stick to it. Christianity is the religion of heaven. Men on account of their lustful ambition and covetousness, have disfigured and rendered it unrecognisable. I do not wonder at, I sympathise with your disappointment. But be a man, study the Gospels, and you will find the same perversions at every step. Come to me often, every day, if possible ; and with my help, instead of finding new sources of alarm, you will be re-enforced in our holy religion by the knowledge of its original simplicity and purity.



“What makes me really sorry is, that on account of your fiery temper, when excited, you forget yourself.” His calm and amiable reasoning had quite changed my feelings, and somewhat restored my tranquility.

I now became conscious of the seriousness of my misdemeanor, and in a voice of compunction, “Pardon!” I said; “pardon, Monsignore, if I have thoughtlessly offended you; I have been disrespectful; pray, forgive me. I had no such intention. I am impatient in temper, and hasty in manner.”

At this moment there was a knock at the door, and the valet appeared.

“Gregorio,” he said, “wishes to see Monsignore on very important business.”

“Let him come in.”

Gregorio, the cook, entered with his round shining red face, smirking, and with a twinkle in his small glittering eye, stopped in the middle of the library, standing with his short legs stretched apart, his left hand resting on his side, and with a Falstaff’s martial air, he raised the right, holding by the feet a couple of large fat pheasants, and shaking them in the air, said; “A royal mouthful, *Monsignore Reverendissimo*, I wish to know if you want them roasted?”

“How came you by those birds?” asked the bishop.

G.—Scratching his head. “Why, sir, I bought them with your money.”

B.—“But the wild breed is entirely exterminated, I know. I am afraid you went poaching.”

G.—A glance at me, and another of caution at the bishop.

B.—“Speak out man! Or take the pheasants back. Are you afraid of Alfio?”

G.—A coquettish glance at the birds, and a timid one at me. “Why, I do not mistrust Mr. Balzani: bless his soul, he is worth his weight in gold! I would rather mistrust myself.”

B.—“Well, then?”



G.—“There are some people, very poor, and as they are very honest, instead of stealing they go and borrow from their father. You know that our very affectionate, loving father—at least, so he calls himself—keeps these birds, and every kind of beast, on a place five miles from the city, where he has a large, elegant mansion in the Chinese style.”

B.—“Called *La Favorita*?”

G.—“Precisely, Monsignore. These birds multiply so rapidly that, notwithstanding the high walls which enclose the place, some of them fly to the neighboring country. The poor people think they have a right to the birds which pass over the limits, and they take them.”

B.—“Do you not know that it is forbidden under heavy penalties to shoot at those birds one mile around that park?”

G.—“Yes, Monsignore, but they do not shoot, they ensnare them.”

B.—Half in earnest and half jocularly. “Do you not know, besides the penalty, this is a theft?”

G.—Silent.

B.—“Answer.”

G.—“I am your humble servant, Monsignore, and I do not deem it proper to answer your questions freely,”

B.—“I give you the permission. Answer freely.”

G.—Passing carefully the pheasants to the left hand, to have the right free for gesticulation. “Since you give me the permission, I would ask, who gave him this property? He stole it from the poor, sir; and spends so much money to keep and feed so many millions of beasts uselessly, whilst that gorgeous and abandoned place is surrounded by many famished people. So it is not to be wondered at, if the poor, now and then, kill a bird to appease the cravings of hunger. I would ask who gave him those one thousand acres of the best land, that would give a good living to twenty thousand poor?”



*B.*—Wincing. “How much did you give for those pheasants?”

*G.*—Raising them high and looking at them with the complacency of an amateur. “Two dollars—as big as chickens! And that poor fellow will live on it for a month. His brother was mangled by the Park keepers for a hare two years ago!”

*B.*—“And these wretched men, to convert into money the purloined game, must expose their lives to the discretion of the buyer?”

*G.*—With pride. “They know whom to trust. There is no instance of a cook’s having ever betrayed a secret!”

*B.*—“How often does it happen to you to meet with such people?”

*G.*—“Rarely, Monsignore.”

*B.*—“Well, if it happens again, give the man the money without taking the game.”

*G.*—Tears in his eyes. “Can I ask you, Monsignore, how I shall cook them?”

*B.*—“One roasted, and the other sweet-sour, with all those ingredients and condiments of yours which are fit to resuscitate the dead. Mind that Mr. Balzani dines with me to-day. Let us have something extra good.”



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A RUNAWAY HORSE.

It was the last of July. It was the end of the fourth academical year of my study of medicine.

The course is appointed to continue three years, but having lost one year, through my youthful escapades, I had to make it up in another year.

My friends and I, underwent the usual examination, and we had the pleasure of seeing awarded to us the certificate of proficiency, preparatory to receiving the diploma of doctorship.

The usual warning was given to us by the rector of the university—a sulky monk—that we, as yet, knew nothing of the science we had studied. The only thing we had acquired was, the method how to study by ourselves.

At the beginning of the next season—the 3rd of November—we had to present to the Commission, or Board of Professors, this certificate, united with four other documents, which were even more essential.

1st.—A certificate from the royal treasurer of having deposited in his hands one hundred dollars—the price of the Diploma :

2nd.—Do of the Curate declaring the party to be a good Roman Catholic, and to have duly participated in the sacraments of confession and communion.

3rd.—Do. of the Criminal Court giving assurance that the name of the applicant, was not found in the records of crimes.



4th.—Do, of the Chief of Police, attesting the applicant to be a good and peaceful subject.

All these certificates cost money, and the last one more than the others.

The Police being an organization, for its mystery and dreadfulness, of the *Inquisition genus*, a man who has need of it, is at the mercy of its officers, from the chief down to the *sbirro*, and subject to wilful extortions.

Happy is he who can obtain a certificate, even with a heavy drain on his purse !

But contented with having received the certificate from our examiners, we did not trouble our minds with any unpleasant forebodings.

As is usual with youth, we thought the world to be entirely ours ; and with the greatest glee arranged how to pass the two months in the country.

It was agreed to spend the month of September at Domenico's, and October at Onofrio's. Before starting for the country I went to see my friend the bishop.

I found him in one of his very cheerful moments. The cause of his glee was a letter just received from an affectionate nephew, then travelling in the East.

When in this humor he always took pleasure in teasing or quizzing me.

After shaking hands, he said :

“ So, in November we are going to wear the doctoral ring ? ”

I comprehended that this was the forerunner of a hail-storm of humor, and tried to take the upper hand by answering : “ Yes, Monsignore, if it pleases God, but I can never aspire to wear it so worthily as you wear that on your finger.” He laughed with the kind of amiable hilarity usual with him when in good humor. Then raising the left hand and pointing to the ring with the fore finger of the other, said :

“ This ring reminds me of the great solemnity of my consecration as a bishop. This is an emblem of the mystic wedding



between the church and the bishop. Oh, what a happy day was that for me ! I felt the importance of the high mission, and my heart throbbed with joy ! But I was young then ! How many undeceivings I have experienced, and how fruitless all my fair promises ! What shall I answer when called to account on the fulfilment of my oath ?”

I perceived from the change of his countenance that he was grieved, and I felt sorry for it. To change abruptly the subject would have been inappropriate with that venerable man ; so trying to give it the turn of a joke, I interposed :

“ It seems to me, that the church being compared to a woman, is guilty of polygamy. Only think how many thousands of grooms exist in Christendom.”

“ You are mistaken,” he answered, “ every bishop is wedded to the church of his own diocese. In fact my spouse is the church of . . . . . She is not of age yet, and as you see me, my wedding or bishopric is only a name, and from all the appearances it seems, that I am doomed to a bachelor’s life, and will never embrace my intended.”

Seeing his face becoming tranquil, I continued :

“ But permit me to observe, your mystic wedding is a kind of similitude of carnal matrimony, but quite different in its morality. Divorce is not permitted by canonic laws, but the bishops divorce their spouses, passing from one diocese to another.” Bishop D. gave me a keen glance, and patting me on the shoulder rather good humoredly, said :

“ You have not observed that those passages are always from a poorer to a richer diocese ! Human nature, my boy ! Human nature ! Interest is at the bottom of everything ! Stick to the Gospel and do not trouble yourself with the doings of men . . . By the by, you will eat a dish of macaroni with me to day. Gregorio has found a sturgeon, a rare fish !”

I accepted with thanks, and begged him that, as I was going to spend two months in the country, he would be kind enough



to keep an eye upon my mother, and write to me if anything happened at home. He graciously accepted my prayer.

Since my first religious disappointment my conversations with the bishop had been of great relief to my conscience. But now and then the old habit prevailed and made me miserable.

Now in my mature age, and whilst I am writing these papers, how differently those matters present themselves under my eyes! If a charitable feeling for human nature did not dispose me to make allowance for youth, inexperience, and fiery temperament, I would laugh at myself for having fallen into such a sea of grief at my first discovery of the wickedness of priestly craft. But how could it be otherwise! Ideas poured in the ears of children since early childhood are difficult to be banished. Taught together with the first infantine words, and riveted by continual training, they become a part of our very nature. They are like impressions made in soft clay petrified by time. Thus we come to believe blindly, what we cannot explain to ourselves. Woe to the mind, when the first disappointment befalls it!

The next day, leaving behind me all city cares, and with the light heart of youth, I began my trip into the country.

The mansion house of my friend Domenico is at a distance of twenty-four miles east of Palermo. Situated on a high hill at the edge of the sea, it commands on one side the vast expanse of the Mediterranean, and on the other a wide landscape of undulating country, covered with orchards, vineyards, and meadows, varied with hills crowned with white houses, and surrounded by a range of high mountains.

It was on the afternoon of the third of September, that I was making my way thither in a post chaise.

The sun was going down behind the western mountains, and delightful zephyrs refreshed the way-farer. The turnpike on which I rode was irregular, and, as it is wont in oppressed countries, it was in a very bad state, so that the carriage



jolted at every step. Sometimes it mounted a hill, giving at once the view of valleys and dales, rocks and clusters of trees ; then again descending shut out every new sight, and then ascending again, as if by magic the landscape had changed into a vineyard, or a meadow, dotted with cattle.

At two miles distance from the place of my destination, the way became a regular slow ascent. On one side there was a belt of high ground, covered with grass. A long row of aloes, with their gigantic spears, headed by their beautiful plumes of flowers announced the vicinity of a country seat. On the other side there was a precipice which descended to the sea.

"May Santa Lucia take away the sight of my eyes, if that is not a runaway horse, with the rider on his back," exclaimed the Vetturino, turning to me.

I looked forward and saw a horse running towards us, followed by a cloud of dust.

After a few seconds I could perceive that the rider was a lady. I rose alarmed and cried to the driver to place the carriage athwart the road. But instead of hearkening to me, he drew the heads of the horses towards the precipice, placing the chaise diagonally, so as to leave an open space between the back of the carriage and the aloes. Then turning with the air of self-satisfaction of a man who knows his business well, said ; "If I minded your bidding the infuriated horse would rush headlong over the precipice, and carry the lady with him."

In the meantime the fugitive had approached near us. With a bound I alighted, and placed myself behind the carriage. A scream of "help" penetrated my heart. The horse was before the chaise. A second more and the lady would have gone to destruction. I sprang at the bridle, but I was not in time ; the head of the horse was past my reach—but with a desperate effort, I grasped the lady's waist, who, eager to seize



a chance of safety, quitted her dangerous situation, and trusted to me for help.

The horse disengaged from the burden, fled amain, rushing past with such impetuosity as to cause me to fall backward insensible, on the ground, carrying with me the lady whom I held so tightly in my arms.

All this transaction was the affair of a moment.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### NOT UNPLEASANT.

WHEN I returned to consciousness I found myself in an elegantly furnished apartment. The bedstead was of German-silver, covered with gauzy silk stuff, striped with purple and gold.

I turned my eyes round with astonishment. At the side of the bed, fronting me, sat my friend Ettore fixing on me an earnest look. At the foot a young lady was standing, with her hands crossed on her bosom. Her form was symmetrically beautiful, her nose Grecian, with a slight tendency to aquiline, her lips full and ruby, her forehead large and her eyes hazel. Her complexion was pale, but perfectly clear, and her plainly worn hair was of a glossy jet. She was looking steadily at me with an air of compassionate interest.

I did not know where I was. The beautiful vision behind the gauzy curtains, appeared to me as in the clouds. The impression conveyed to my brain was of an angel—an apparition from Paradise. But my head was too weak for such strong impressions, and I fell again into lethargy. A couple of hours passed and I was brought into consciousness again by the rasp-



ing sound of a voice saying, "I love this blunt fellow, and I like his frankness not a little."

It was the Marquis della Torre who spoke, intending to lower his full sonorous voice. I raised my heavy eye-lids and beheld all my friends surrounding the bed. But I looked for some one else who had disappeared.

"How do you feel?" whispered all in concert.

"My head aches spasmodically," I answered. "But where am I?"

The marquis stopped me with a benevolent gesture, accompanying it with the words, "silence is the order of the day." Then turning to Domenico, "please, sir, hasten the doctor."

The old gentleman came in. His head was hoar with the frost of seventy years. His physiognomy wore the mark of the man who had for many years exercised the healing profession for the sake of mankind.

The small room was crowded, but absolute silence reigned there. The doctor raised the curtain and pressed my pulse for full five minutes. The deepest anxiety was written on the countenances of all, when with a musical voice he broke the silence; "What do you feel, my noble friend?"

"Oh, my head," I answered.

"That is nothing—cheer up and keep quiet." Then turning toward the assembly, "Thank God, the danger is over. No brain fever. In a few days he will be able to go hunting."

He gave me an opiate; enjoined them to watch me closely, to administer some broth on my awaking, and above all to avoid every kind of excitement.

Five days had elapsed, and I was comfortably sitting in a cushioned arm-chair. By dint of questioning, I had been apprised, at times, that in snatching the young lady from the saddle, I had been hurled by the impetus of the steed headlong on the verge of the precipice where the horse had made his last jump; that I had luckily fallen upon an accumulation of



sand and dust ; that the young lady was unhurt, having fallen upon me. The doctor came in accompanied by my friends. He sat himself down and felt of my pulse.

" You may do now whatever you like," he said, looking at me as with wonder ; " another would say : I have saved you ; but you owe it only to your strong constitution." He patted my head and went away.

" Now," said Giuseppe, " the first thing is to come into the parlor, and receive the thanks of a doting father, and of a beautiful daughter." I have always disliked the display of thankfulness from those I have had the pleasure of serving ; and, the more the greater the service.

I felt nervous, but I could not help it. Entering the parlor by the side of Domenico, I found it crowded. Our first step was towards his father, mother, sister, and a younger brother.

" I have the pleasure," said he, addressing them ; " of introducing to you my friend Alfio Balzani—my father, the Baron Tureiro, my mother, the Baroness—my sister, my brother."

There were no compliments exchanged. All came round me with the most flattering words. My friend Guiseppe interrupted by saying, " it is my duty now to introduce you to the lady you have saved. The lawyer Grasso, Miss Serafina Grasso—his daughter." He had not finished uttering the last word, when an old respectable looking gentleman, extending his arms, embraced me tightly and kissed my cheek. He was filled with emotion, and could not say anything else but " my son, my son, I owe you my life."

A young lady was beside him, and when he released me, she grasped my hand and bent her head. She could not say a word, but soon I felt my hand wet with tears. Those tears were of fire, and burnt me to the heart.

I was excited, nervous, and obliged to sit down. Miss Serafina was a real Seraph, physically and morally.



Ice lemonade went round, but it could not quench the burning of my blood. When I had regained a little composure, I addressed her, "I think I have had the pleasure of seeing you somewhere. If it is so, would you be indulgent enough to tell me where?"

With a deep blush, she answered; "at the Marquis's della Torre—on the evening of the grand soiree;" and she cast her eyes down with a blush.

A flash of recollection apprised me that she was the same congenial beauty, who had freed me from my embarrassingly awkward position.

Breakfast was served that morning in the garden, under a beautifully contrived octagonal arbor covered with every kind of sweet scented vine. Birds, hidden in small cages among the foliage, with harmonious songs vied with the pleasant murmur of a fountain falling into an ornamented marble basin, before the entrance of the verdant apartment.

But the falling water, the warbling of the birds, the breeze of the sea, the fragrance of the flowers, the tempting appearance of luscious fruit, were not heeded by me, so absorbed was I in the contemplation of the beauty who sat opposite to me.

I have always admired dignity in a woman, and this young lady had the bearing of a queen.

I tried not to look at her rudely, but my furtive glances betrayed the condition of my mind.

After breakfast, the seven friends—we had all joined there—gathered under a clump of pear trees loaded with fruit. There we arranged our hunting plan, and made a memorandum of the good hunting grounds; but it was unanimously agreed not to begin our excursion before the third day, so that I could recover my usual strength.

"But, my dear Alfio," said Ettore to me, tapping my shoulder, "we are speaking of hunting; it seems to me that a fair Diana has hunted and caught you already."



"What do you mean?" I asked in a severe tone.

"Why," he answered, laughing, "I have seen at table a skirmishing of glances and blushes."

I did not like it. The fire that I felt in my bosom I deemed a sacred flame, not to be profaned by any mortal, even my bosom friends. I thought to keep it there secret from all eyes, but my very eyes had betrayed me. I was exasperated, and in a harsh manner I said that a word, a wink, a nod on the subject, would be sufficient to put an end to our intimacy.

"I wish I had a looking glass," said Guiseppe, "to show you how ugly you look when you get so angry. Just the face of a tyrant. Can you think that any of us could mean an offence? We love you, we esteem Miss Grasso. Even if our surmise were well founded, you are worthy of one another, I think."

I turned from pale to red, and *vice versa*.

"Well," he continued, "if it thus displeases you, we promise not to say a word about it any more. Let us go and shoot birds in yonder garden."

I bent my head down, half pleased, half mortified, and went along with them.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

LU ZU PEPPE.\*

TWICE a week we went on a hunting excursion, choosing the places where game was plentiful. The Marquis della Torre had left with his family for a watering place, but not before promising us to give Ettore permission to go to Onofrio's hall on the first of the next month.

Onofrio had been recalled home by his father on business of importance. Before taking leave he invited the Baron and all the party, and particularly the lawyer Grasso and his daughter to spend the vintage time at his father's hall.

My friend Andrea had shown symptoms of being in love with the beautiful brunette, Miss Enrichetta Tureno, Domenico's sister.

My intercourse with Miss Serafina had grown more intimate. When in her presence I felt as if under a spell; unmindful of aught, but that I was in her presence and under the fascinating influence of her brilliant eyes. But whilst her looks spoke volumes, her dignified manners held me in subjection.

One evening, Domenico told us that the next day we were to go hunting in a valley near the town of Parco. This valley being some ten miles distant we had to start before dawn.

Andrea declined being one of the party under plea of a headache. Thus the company consisted of Antonio, Domenico,

\* UNCLE JOE. The terms uncle and aunt are applied to every married man and woman in the villages, who have arrived at a mature age.



Giuseppe and I. We were accompanied by a guide leading an ass with provisions.

The rising sun found us on a mountain overlooking the town of Pareo. The vegetation was luxuriant. There appeared to be a vast continuation of woods, whilst not a forest tree was to be found. Aged fruit trees, tall and compact gave at a distance the aspect of a wilderness, whilst he who was close to the spot might imagine it to be an eden. The diversity of fruits, the gurgling of a fresh crystalline brook, the warbling and chirping of all the family of birds that came to partake of the luxury of honey figs, the lowing of cattle and the continual tinkling of their bells, the murmuring of the leaves agitated by the morning breeze, inspired the heart to adore the Creator in the work of his creation. We hunted with success. Already our ass was loaded with rabbits and hares, and the cravings of hunger began to be felt.

As we were going along, near the centre of a little valley, shut in by high hills, the driver exclaimed :

“ There are people on the hills.”

We stopped and looked around.

There were eight men, with each his gun in hand, descending the hills around us in a leisurely manner, in lines converging to the centre.

It was a clear case we were surrounded and at their mercy, for we had but four guns, the servant carrying only his knife.

A few hurried exclamations were made by the different members of our small party, and then my comrades looked to their guns and loosened in their sheaths the long hunting-knives we usually wore on these distant excursions, evidently getting ready for a fight.

“ Stop !” said I. “ These are desperate men, and though we might shed a good deal of blood, we should pretty certainly be overcome. In this case, diplomacy is better than war.



The risk is about the same either way, and I have a plan in my head that will, I think, get us clear without any great loss."

My companions listened to my plan, and at length agreed to follow my directions. There was a large flat rock not far from us. I told the vetturino to lead thither our sumpter ass, and then to lay the cloth and spread out our provisions.

First came forth a portly flask of wine, then a goodly ham, then some fine white bread, then some cold fowls, then some *salami* (a kind of large smoked sausage, some three inches thick), then some knick-knacks and condiments, in short everything necessary for a very satisfactory hill-side banquet.

Those who were approaching us could see distinctly every movement, and these appetising preparations had therefore full time to penetrate their souls, and call the water to their mouths.

My companions had at my request put off their warlike looks, and we sat down quietly upon the rock, keeping our guns, however, between our knees, so as to be ready, if necessary, for the last resort.

When the nearest bandit came within ear-shot, I called out as loudly as I could, "Viva Maria!" the usual country salutation. The man stopped astonished; but I followed up this first attack with:

"Come on, my brave fellow; come up here and sit down. Here's enough for all; don't be afraid to take hold."

Then, as the others came nearer, I rose and called out.

"Come on, friends; take your seats around; there's room here."

The one who seemed their chief stepped forward and saluted me with gravity; then approaching an angle of the rock, he placed his gun against it. The rest all followed his example, notwithstanding that we still retained our arms. Each also drew forth his knife and pistols and placed them on the rock. Then unbinding the sashes from their waists, they unbuckled the broad leathern belt which held their cartridges, and laid



them carefully down together. Saluting us again with the ordinary expressions of politeness, they took their places around the viands, while we, having of course laid aside our guns, played the part of liberal hosts, and all fell to with a will like men whose appetites had been thoroughly developed by the keen mountain air.

Two of our formidable guests were under-sized, but quite stout men. Their stoutness did not, however, consist of fat, but of thick layers of powerful muscle. One of these two had lost his left hand and the lower half of his left fore-arm. There was also an ugly scar over the outer corner of his left eye, which appeared to have been made by the passage of a bullet.

His eyes were light-colored, but bright and piercing; his nose large. His mouth looked like a gash in his face, so tightly were the bloodless lips compressed, and his somewhat protruding chin was covered with a heavy black beard. His skin, like that of all his band, from constant exposure to sun and wind, resembled dark bronze.

Their dress was such as the men of the country usually wear, breeches of cotton velvet, blue, green, or brown, according to the taste of the wearer; a sort of frock coat of the same, reaching almost to the knee; heavy shoes, and stockings an inch thick; a cravat of black silk about the throat and a broad belt of pliable leather at the waist, the upper half forming a flap to cover the lower, and protect from rain the cartridges which were set closely, side by side, in little tubes of brass, sewed fast to the leather. A broad red sash held the pistols and the knife, and on their heads they wore the usual *berretta*, or cap of the country. This is knit of strong, woolen stuff, and resembles a huge purse, with a woolen tuft at either end. When put on, one tuft is thrust in, so as to make a hollow, and it is thus pulled as far on the head as suits the con-



venience of the wearer, the other end hanging down behind, or on the left side.

The two shorter ones, it appeared, were both chiefs, and called each other brother, though they were not relatives. The rest were tall, strong men, some of them deeply pitted with the small-pox, and some bearing on their scarred visages the indelible marks of battle, or of broil.

When "the wild rage of hunger was appeased," and "our souls had lost the desire of eating and of drinking," we talked of hunting, and each one told some story of wolf-hunts, of good shots, of tumbling into pits or ancient excavations, whose mouths were overgrown with bushes, and other haps and mishaps of a hunter's life, all parties of course avoiding the most distant allusion to the peculiar profession of our guests.

My intercourse with my countrymen of the interior had taught me that they almost all like a pinch of good snuff; so pulling out a large, oblong black box, in which I usually carried a good supply to humor this little weakness, I offered it to our guests, who appeared to enjoy the powdered weed.

"But," said the one-armed chief, "excuse me; has your Excellency any powder to spare?"

"Oh! yes. Here, bring out that large flask of powder and pour out half of it on this piece of paper for our brave friends here."

So said, so done. Half of our reserve of powder was made over to them, and it was received with many thanks.

As the day was now coming to a close, we rose to depart. Our mountain friends walked on along with us, quietly conversing. As we were passing over a small table-land, one of the chiefs stopped and said:

"Come, let us fire at a mark. Of how many points is this powder of yours?"

I ought perhaps to explain to you that our mode of comparing the force of powder is to put some of it in a small brass



tube, which answers as a charger. The inside of this little tube is set with small points at equal distances, and with newly-purchased powder we make several trials to find out what quantity of powder gives most force to the ball.

I told him it was of six points.

"Then it must be very good."

"*Va fratello a mettermi la merca,*" (go, brother, make me a target,) said he to *Il Monco*, (the maimed.)

We looked about us, but could not see either any rock or any tree that would answer for that purpose. Our one-armed friend, however, quietly paced off two hundred paces, and then pulling down his woollen cap over his ears, and straightening up the top, so as to make of it a regular cone, terminating in a tuft, he stood upright, as immovable as a rock.

The other slowly raised his gun, appeared to take careful aim, and fired.

Whereupon the target came walking quietly toward us, and showed us, without any emotion, where the bullet had cut away a part of the woollen tuft.

"*Adesso, va tu fratello a mettere la merca a me,*" (now, go you, brother to make a target for me )

The other went off to the same distance and turned his back to us; then taking off his *berretta*, (cap,) he placed his feet about a yard apart, and turning the cap upside down, held it so that the tuft just appeared between his legs.

In spite of our conviction that *Il Monco* must be as good a shot as the other, we could not repress a thrill of horror at the thought of a man with whom we had just 'broken bread' being exposed to such terrible danger.

But the one-armed bandit was just as calm and collected as he was while munching our provisions. Supporting his gun on the stump of his left arm, he pointed it at first to the ground, then raising it gradually, so as to get the true line of aim, he touched the trigger.



As we saw the wool fly from the tuft, we all breathed more freely, and saw with pleasure the second target come toward us as composedly as the first.

There was no more shooting after that; for no one cared to measure himself with such marksmen. It requires men of this temper to manage a '*branco di banditi*.' Some of these chiefs are indeed men originally of estimable character, whom the unendurable oppressions of a bad government have driven to the mountains, and there is among them generally a rude sense of honor, so that he who has drunk of the same cup with them is not only safe from all wrong on their part, but may count upon their friendly offices with others.

Not long after the shooting-match, we came near the town of Parco. Here the chief stopped, and as he courteously lifted his cap from his head, I thought they might still wish to levy tribute upon us, and that it would be wiser to forestall their wishes than to wait for their demands.

"Are you in want of any money, my friend?"

"Oh!—no, Signore. You have given us powder and tobacco, the two things most difficult for us to obtain, and we thank you. We are sorry that we cannot accompany you any further; but if you should be stopped or interfered with at any time, either by day or by night, among these mountains, just say (laying his hand upon his breast) that Lu Zu Peppi (Uncle Joe) is your friend, and no man will harm you."

We bade each other a friendly adieu, and parted in peace.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### NO MORE HUNTING.

OUR adventure with *lu Zu Peppi* had made a great impression at Tureiro's Hall. Every one had something to say about it. The Baron said that I was a successful incipient diplomatist. The ladies spoke of me as a subject of romance. Miss Serafina alone refrained from all jokes on the topic. I went to take a ramble in the garden to keep company with my thoughts. The sun was fast declining. His crimson beams were tinging with sanguine hues the ridges of the hills, and the crests of the trees. I sauntered into a pavilion, and sat at the entrance which opened to the west.

Whilst attracted by the loveliness of the scene, and lost in the contemplation of the beauty of nature, my attention was arrested by the rustling sound of a silk dress. Turning my eyes to the other entrance of the summer house, Signorina Grasso presented herself to my sight. She was paler than usual, but composed and more imposing. I could not believe my eyes. I felt overcome with joy. We looked at each other, and neither of us could utter a word.

What a strange riddle is the human heart! Whilst I was elated with the pleasure of seeing her there, I felt ill at ease, and wished her far, far off. When silence became too painful to both of us, the young lady began with a faltering voice, "I hope that you will not misconstrue my actions. Seeing you here, I thought it a good opportunity to say to you a few words. I owe to you, Mr. Balzani, a debt of gratitude. You saved



my life at the risk of yours, and I feel it deeply in my heart."

"Miss Serafina," I replied, "I beg of you to feel acquitted of that debt, because I would have done the same thing to any human creature in the same predicament."

"I cannot doubt," she continued with a deep blush, "that it is so on your side. But relying on your generosity, I venture to ask you to increase my debt by doing me a new favor. You know we ladies are selfish, exacting, and not a little presumptuous. When we receive a favor we think ourselves entitled to ask another. Your encounter with the bandits has made me miserable, and, only for selfishness, I make bold to ask of you not to go hunting any more."

Trembling like an aspen, she was not able to finish. For me, I felt as if transported into a heaven of bliss. I could not control my emotion, and with all the earnestness of my heart, I answered; "Miss Grasso, your commands are a law to me. A short time has been sufficient for me to learn how to appreciate your noble heart. I esteem you, I——oh, how much I respect you! My life, my will, my thoughts, all at your feet——"

"Stop, stop!" she interrupted; "I thank you." She could not say more, and with her hand pressing her heart, she nodded an adieu, and hurried with faltering steps out of the summer house.

I remained in a trance of happiness, in a state of inexpressible beatitude, muttering the words—she loves me. Hours passed away in sweet reveries. . . . .

The voice of my friend Giuseppe loudly calling me by name throughout the garden, broke the spell.

"What are you doing there alone," he said; "they are all looking for you, it is supper time."

"Supper!" said I, "It is not ten yet."

"It is twelve o'clock, my sweet dreamer," he answered. "Now I see you have slept all this time."



The next day at breakfast, Domenico proposed a hunting excursion for the succeeding morning. Miss Serafina's eyes and mine met in an instant as if by an electric touch. I saw a telegraphic glance from Miss Enrichetta to her mother, and I comprehended that a feminine conspiracy was on foot.

"Fie on you, gentlemen," said the baroness. "Do you intend to monopolize the time to yourselves, and leave the ladies at the hall? This is very ungallant on your part. To-morrow we wish to have a ride, and you will accompany us."

Signorina Grasso had managed to relieve me from the unpleasant task of refusing to accompany my friends. And every day thereafter the ladies had the address to engage us in their service for the next

The following morning after breakfast we all mounted on horseback.

It was a cloudy day, and the baron proposed to make the tour of his demesne.

The vegetation was luxuriant. Olive trees, vineyards orchards, fields, meadows, all presented a picturesque aspect.

Reaching a high ground, we found the peasants gathered in a group, apparently observing some object. As we approached they all drew up in a line and took off their caps. We now saw a deep hole in the ground.

"What are you doing there," asked the baron of one, who being a little forward, appeared to be the overseer.

"We have taken down the old olive tree killed by the lightning last winter; and in digging out the root, your Excellence, we found a pit. There seems to be some glittering object within it. We just lowered Tonio down with a rope, and he has brought out an ugly flask."

"Let me see," said the baron, with a frown.

The man bent down, picked up an Etruscan vase of rare beauty, and handed it to the baron.

"The d——l," exclaimed the baron, infuriated. "You



lazy churls! you take my money, and employ my time in digging pieces of ugly, good-for-nothing flasks. Quick! fill up that hole, or I will dismiss all of you."

We did not stir from the spot until the hole was entirely refilled.

All the way back to the hall the baron was in a very bad humor, and I could not divine the reason. After dinner the baron invited us into the library, and showed us that beautiful vase. Then he said:

"You must excuse my rudeness of this morning. Sometimes one cannot master his own feelings. I have a treasure under my feet and cannot use it. The law forbids the proprietor of the land to dig either mines or antiquities under the penalty of forfeiture and imprisonment. Woe to me if the police know that I have found this precious vase."

"But how is it," I asked, "that those things are found here?"

"It is thought," he answered, "that here was the ancient city of Himera, of which we know the existence but not its precise site"

"You are right, baron," said Mr. Grasso, "to act with so much circumspectness. I will relate to you what happened to a poor man six years ago.

"There is a law by which, if a man finds by accident a buried treasure, he is entitled to one third of its amount. One third goes in favor of the owner of the property, where it is found, and the other part goes to the royal treasury.

"A poor man was seeking for snails one day, in a field belonging to the prince of Aci. In digging deep he saw a piece of thick rope, with a knot. He tried to pull it up, but the rope did not yield. Deeper and deeper he dug spurred by curiosity, and the rope still continued firm. Finally he reached a slab with an iron ring where the rope was secured. Raising the stone he found a wooden box entirely decayed. To raise the lid was an easy task.



A great quantity of ancient gold coins presented themselves to his affrighted eyes. The poor soul had never seen a gold coin in his life. This sight terrified and intoxicated him. His first impulse was to look round, to ascertain if any one had seen him ; the second to replace the earth in the hole. The honest man went to a lawyer for advice, keeping to himself the peculiarity of the discovery. The man of law counselled him to reveal the whole to the police and to claim the third part of it.

The police accompanied to the spot the finder of the treasure with his arms pinioned ; took the gold and put the poor man into jail. The money disappeared, and its wretched finder has remained in prison ever since."

" On what plea," I asked, " did they put him into prison ?"

" On the pretended charge," answered Mr. Grasse, " that the man hid part of the treasure. They know very well that if the man is at large he will claim his third part."

" Has this man neither relatives, nor friends ?"

" No one has claimed him, As for friends ; if he has any, who will dare to undertake his cause against the police ?"

I bit my lips without further observations.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### A TRIP.

THE dawn of the third of October saw the company of Tureiro's hall mounted on horseback for a journey of twenty-four miles west to Erranti's hall. The party was composed of the baron and baroness, their fair daughter Enrichetta, and their son Domenico; lawyer Grasso and Signorina Serafina, his daughter; my friends Antonio, Giuseppe, Andrea and myself. The ladies had declined to go in *Lettiga*—a litter generally used by ladies travelling on the mountains.

Four servants rode armed to the teeth; two going in advance, and two forming the rear guard.

The apparel of these men was fantastic indeed. They wore a green velvet pea-jacket, with red collar and cuffs, trimmed with gold galloon, secured by two rows of large oval buttons with a rich trimming of silk cords. The nether man was incased in breeches of the same material, with gold galloon sewed on the sides, and fastened at the knees with a steel buckle, and long heavy boots armed with powerful spurs. On the head they wore a round cloth cap, also of green, terminating with a point and a tassel which hung down behind. In front of this cap there was a brass badge extending from ear to ear, gradually increasing in breadth and terminating in a semicircle three inches higher than the head. This badge bore engraved the escutcheon and the initials of the baron. From one of the button-holes hung like a charm a triple fine brass chain, at the end of which were a powder measure, a pin and a small brush.



The two last articles were used by men of arms to keep clean the locks of their guns and pistols. A black leather belt, with silver initials in the centre, crossed diagonally their breast from the right shoulder, and terminated behind, sustaining a heavy cartridge box. A small brass horn hanging on the right side by a red silk cord which crossed from the left shoulder, gave the finishing touch to their costume.

They were mounted on rough but powerful horses. The saddle-bow was ten inches higher than the seat, and carried two heavy pistols, while behind there was tied a high portmantau. The whole was covered with a fleecy sheep skin, but not so as to interfere with the rider snatching up the pistol at any moment. Thus he was so securely lodged in the saddle, that in case of strife he could abandon the reins on the neck of the well-trained animal, without fear of losing his seat. Besides pistols they carried a sword secured horizontally under the saddle-bow, the hilt placed to the right, a gun lay on the saddle in front of the rider, and a large knife eighteen inches long, whose heavy handle was seen protruding out of the pocket on the outside of the right leg.

The physiognomies of these four men were warlike to look at.

The impression one received at the first glance, was of thieving and murder. Their bronzed, scarred faces and sinister looks were not the best recommendation in the world. In fact, these gentlemen once belonged to the fraternity of the highway. Not because they were daunted by persecution, but tired of their lawless life, they sought honest work and donned the livery of the baron.

These retired bandits make most honest servants. Besides performing scrupulously their labor, they are a safeguard to their employers, for their change of life does not diminish the respect, and the mutual pledge of their brotherhood. There is no instance, that a country-seat, or a traveller has ever been robbed, when under the guardianship of one of these men.



They are known by the denomination of *Campieri*—Rural Guard. The barons in protecting them, redeemed to society men who are not bad at heart, and benefited at the same time their own interests.

In order to avoid the hot sun on the road, we determined to ride through by-paths well known to our *Campieri*.

Having ladies to escort we travelled leisurely, and were all in high spirits. The beauty of the country, added an unexpressible elation to my mind, so that I felt a sort of intoxication of happiness.

Here we crossed on a rocky ridge adorned with wild briars, and flowers of every color, sparkling with dew, and wafting to us their sweet fragrance. Further on we rode under the canopy of the towering oak, the walnut and the chestnut robed in the many colored foliage of Autumn. Hills, dales, valleys we crossed, enchanted with the varieties of their beauty. Grapes and fruit of every kind were coquetting us at each step.

Birds darting away suddenly at our approach, and flying swiftly upwards sang shrill notes of joy.

The happy foresight of my friend Andrea gave the finishing touch to our romantic journey.

He carried a guitar suspended behind him by a ribbon. His place in the road was always at Miss Enrichetta's side.

He did not presume to ask her for a song, but now and then he touched the strings of the instrument in pleading harmonious tones. The young lady turned to him her smiling face to meet his look of entreaty. All the company begged for a song. And the beautiful creature sung a ballad; of course one of love. And then came Miss Serafina's turn. And so on one after another.

We were at the entrance of a ravine. A spring of fresh water, bubbling from the earth pursued its downward course. A small projecting table land hedged with black berries formed a kind of platform, canopied by an aged chestnut tree. The



spot was inviting, and the baron proposed to stop, and take some refreshment.

At distance of about a musket shot there was a farm house. Thither the baron sent a Campieri to ask the people to allow us a supply of fruits.

We had all kind of fruit within the reach of our hands. But it is customary for whoever wants any, to ask it from the owner: and sometimes one must walk a long distance before finding him. The peasants on their side are so obliging and so hospitable, that often it is difficult to induce them to receive money in payment for what they have given you.

In the mean while we alighted. I offered my hand to Miss Serafina. It might have been to take a firm hold to leap from the saddle or for some other reason, she pressed my hand tightly. The pressure had such a magnetic power that a thrill of beatitude run through my nerves and my knees trembled.

I presume that she perceived the state of my feelings; for in a sweet and complaisant manner, she took my arm, saying, "let us have a little survey of our camping spot."

At the distance of twenty paces we saw a countryman hoeing behind a cluster of fig trees. He was a man near forty, stout and healthy, pitted with small pox.

"*Viva Maria*," said I, "working hard, my good man?"

The laborer stopped hoeing, straightened himself from his bending posture, and pressed his left hand on the handle of the hoe as in a state of rest. With his right hand he took off his woollen cap and wiped with it the perspiration from his forehead. By this time having given a sufficiently scrutinizing glance at both of us, he said,

"Beauty and youth may thrill the heart,  
But woful is the time to part."

A slight pressure of my arm showed me that those words had struck a chord in another's heart.

"What have we here?" said Signor Grasso, who approached.



"A poet," I answered with a sneer.

The rustic colored at the sarcasm, and in a lofty and proud manner said :

"Rude though the verse, the gifts of song  
To nature's favored ones belong."

This repartee, although from a poor peasant, silenced me.

The baron who had approached us relieved me by addressing the poet, "Come with us, my friend, and have a glass of wine."

"I thank your excellency," replied with a bow, the son of Apollo "It ill becomes me to defraud my employer of his time ;" so saying he continued his hoeing.

By this time the good dame of the farm had provided us with chairs, stools, tumblers, a pitcher and knives. On a stool in the center, she placed a willow basket woven in the form of a tray. This receptacle was filled with peaches, grapes, figs, apples, prunes of different kinds and colors ; all decked with vine leaves and flowers. The sight was picturesque, but the fragrance was irresistible. The Campieri had brought out of their saddle-bags a flask of Syracuse wine, some bread, Bologna sausages, boiled eggs and sugar plums.

The dame of the farm refused to partake of our refection, saying that she had breakfasted. We began to eat with that perfect silence generally observed at the beginning of meals, when the mouth is used only to obey the cravings of hunger, and the mind is absorbed in relishing the taste of good cheer.

Politeness indeed led the baron to address some words to our hostess, Signorina Catarina Spinosa, and, as she was not partaking of our unromantic pleasure, and was talkatively disposed, she entertained us with her history as follows :

"All the lands around for four miles belong to me. I am a widow with four sons and a daughter. My husband was a handsome and intelligent man. One day we went to the nearest town to enjoy the festival of the blessed patriarch Saint Jo-



seph. In the evening, whilst looking at the fire-works in the square, a pinch in my arm made me start with pain. I restrained myself so as not to alarm my husband, and turning round saw a captain. He was the commandant of the garrison; a nobleman—the son of the nurse of the hereditary prince of the realm.

“In the course of the next week the captain came to the farm; he was tired he said, and asked for a glass of wine. I was alone, and he made insulting propositions. I slapped his face. The captain became outrageous, and, as I screamed for help, servants ran up. Mr. Spinosa was at hand, and coming in heard of the brutal conduct of the captain. The latter put his hand to his sword-hilt, but Mr. Spinosa flew at him, broke his sword, and kicked him out. That night a knock was heard at the door of the farm-house—you know what that portends! Mr. Spinosa was arrested, pinioned, and carried away.

“Next day I went to town and asked for my husband. The authorities answered that he was arrested by superior order. *For misure dipolizia*—for secret reasons of police. This was the only satisfaction I could obtain. Maddened with despair, I went to Palermo. After waiting many days for an audience, the answers I received from the Lieutenant General were as evasive as from the mayor of the town. I took passage in a ship and went to Naples. I had to spend a bag of money in bribes, and six months in waiting to obtain an audience of the king. On my knees I related my sad story. The king was very amiable; sometimes he frowned. At the end he said he would look into the matter personally. But a lady of high rank being concerned, he hinted, it would be proper to see that lady. And to that lady I went; begging pardon for the insult the captain had offered me. The lady haughtily replied that she would beg of the king to release the farmer. And she hoped that it would be a good lesson for all churls to know henceforward how to behave towards high-born personages.



Eight months after the arrest, Mr. Spinosa was restored to his family. But a few days after he was found shot dead among the olive trees on his farm. I again had recourse to the authorities, but the only result was the removal of the Captain's company from that town to the Capitol."

Signora Catarina's tale had interested us. I saw tears trickling from the ladies' eyes. The baron perceiving that the loquaciousness of the lady on this topic would prolong the discourse to an inconvenient length, changed the subject by asking:

"What is that man hoeing yonder?"

"He is one of our poets," answered Signora Spinosa. "We have several poets around here. Oh, if you heard them when they gather in the farm house on Sunday! What beautiful verses they make on woods, birds, storms, lady-loves, and so on."

"I have seen," interrupted Signor Grasso, "in my travels, many of these prodigies of nature, and once a shepherd, illiterate—of course they are all illiterate—began to argue with me on abstract matters with a marvellous degree of logic. I tried to lead him astray by force of syllogisms, but to his credit be it said, he quite defeated me."

At this, Domenico could refrain himself no longer, and exclaimed:

"Oh, my poor country! How glorious thou wouldst be if thy sons had the means of education. How many geniuses would daily come out of thee that are now buried in brute ignorance."

Baron Tureiro frowned, and threw an angry glance at his son, who at the same time showed refractory symptoms. But Miss Enrichetta interrupted by asking Signora Catarina:

"Might we have the pleasure of seeing your daughter?"

"Calogero, go and call Maria," said the dame to a stripling who had assisted to prepare our rustic meal. A pretty, bux-



om girl of eighteen slowly advanced from the house toward us, blushing and hiding her eyes with her white apron.

The two young ladies went to meet her, and resorted to every kind of caress to overcome her shyness. Miss Serafina slipped a ring on to her finger, telling her :

“Keep this for my sake. You must come to see me ; and if you want anything write to me.”

The country girl turned scarlet, and her mother answered for her.

“Ladies, my daughter knows not how to write—thank God !”

The baroness said with surprise :

“It seems that you are proud of your daughter’s lack of instruction.”

“Yes, madam,” she answered with an air of self-satisfaction ; “I train my children in the way of the Lord. In books is found perdition. Thus our good pastor says. It is enough for us to know what he teaches. As for girls, it is quite forbidden. If a girl has the misfortune to know how to write, the first thing she does is to write a letter to her lover. I shudder even in thinking of it !”

The good woman really thought that to instruct her child would be a capital sin. This prejudice is fostered not only in the country, but even among the lower classes in the capital. Seeing that the girl was very ill at ease among us, we hastened our departure, not without thanking our obliging hostess, and making cordial offers of service.

Beyond this place the country became wild and almost deserted. The fields uncultivated, full of thistles and weeds ; the trees, with unpruned, dead branches, contrasting strongly with the vegetating part, full of fruit. Cottages and farm houses, tumbling down and abandoned. The change was remarkable, that it really seemed another country.

“Why is this land so desolate ?” I asked of lawyer Grasso, who rode at the right side of his daughter.



"This is," he answered, "a land abandoned by its owner."

"Why? is the owner dead and without heirs?"

"I do not know, Mr. Balzani. It may be and it may not be so. You will find a great part of our lands thus abandoned, and not for lack of heirs. The fact is that the taxes are so enormous, that the owner who has no capital cannot afford to pay them and his laborers beside; so they choose rather to abandon their property, in order that they may not be prosecuted by the revenue officers."

"But," I observed, "they could borrow money."

"That would not do either," returned Mr. Grasso; "what with taxes and labor, the net proceeds would scarcely suffice to pay the enormous interest, even with a good harvest, and if the harvest happens to be bad, the poor owner will go to the debtor's prison."

"Now I understand," I said in a melancholy tone, "why this country, which in the times of the Romans was called the *Granary of Italy*, can now scarcely give bread to its own children." Poor country!

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE VINTAGE.

THE habitation of my friend Onofrio Errante occupied a high hill which a plantation of tall majestic laurel tress encircled as with a crown. The mansion was a two storied white building, surrounded with piazzas and adorned with marble statues. The court-yard, 300 feet square, was fenced in with iron railings, and thick rows of Oleanders, loaded with their scented flowers. A beautiful marble fountain was placed in the centre. A representation of the Naiads in the act of coming out of the water served to enhance its beauty. Attached to this enclosure,



on the right, were several out-buildings, and the farm-house. A large iron gate, which served as a communication with the farm, opened at the pleasure of the master.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the spot. For a couple of miles we could plainly perceive that the hand of man had been busy there to add to the natural fertility of the soil. Vineyards followed luxuriant vineyards. The dark green foliage of fruit trees of every kind scattered all over, made a beautiful contrast with the pale green of the grape leaves. Thickets of olive trees planted by the hands of the Saracens,—a still living memento of calamitous and glorious ages,—waved their lofty white and green tops like plumes. Instead of wild reeds, orange groves with their perennial fruit and blossoms lined the water's edge. There was not a spot—not a crag, that the industry of man had not turned to advantage.

A sweet and cheerful music was heard at a distance. "What is it?" I asked of the baron.

"It is the vintage song," he answered. "A little while, and you will see a delightful scene."

In fact, scarcely had we ridden a quarter of a mile before an enchanting prospect offered itself to our view.

On ladders attached to trees and arbors where the vines clung, scores of men and women were standing and picking the grapes. A great number of women, dressed in garments of vivid colors, were filling their baskets with Bacchus's juicy fruit. Some of them wore a wreath of flowers, others had a bunch of poppies drooping on one side of their heads, and forming a contrast with their luxuriant glossy black hair. Bands of little boys and girls adorned in like manner were gathering red and yellow flowers. Many of these women were seen walking from different parts to a central point, carrying on their shoulders baskets filled to the brim with grapes. Flowers were coquettishly hanging from amongst the grapes. Other women



were seen coming back to replenish their baskets. They formed a number of distinct groups. To the music of flutes played by striplings they sang the vintage song, gracefully keeping time with a sideway swinging motion of their heads.

My friend Onofrio Errante, who had already been apprised of our approach, now came to meet us. He was accompanied by his father, mother and three younger brothers.

The usual greetings over, I said to him, pointing at the peasants, "It is very kind of you to prepare such a festival for us."

"No," he answered, laughing, "it is their way of working during the vintage. Thus they labor with more alacrity, and never get weary. To-night we shall have a *fête champêtre* on purpose for the ladies."

"If it is only for the ladies' benefit, I might as well turn my horse's head, and go back to Palermo." My repartee provoked Onofrio to deal me a cut on the back with his whip which was a pretty sharp joke, indeed. But it procured me likewise a look of great indignation from Miss Grasso, which quite checked my jocular humor, and, in comparison, made me feel the smarting of the whip as only a mere joke, which it was intended to be.

Alighting in the court-yard, Mr. Errante invited us to see his men working in the wine press.

It was a room one hundred feet square, on the ground floor. Its ordinary appearance was rustic. Flag pavement, unplastered stone walls, and open rafters. But this rough tenement had been decked for the season by the hand of the husbandman.

Evergreen trees were thrust into the floor at the four corners, and ornamented with flowers; and large garlands of orange leaves with their fruit were hanging high on the walls and from the beams of the roof.

Just in the centre, seven feet high from the floor, there was raised a platform, twenty feet square. Two large step ladders leaned against it on the left and right sides.



Placed upon this platform was a huge tub fifteen feet in diameter. Four athletic men with naked shoulders, red flannel trousers, and a wreath of grape leaves encircling their foreheads, stood in that vast tub, crushing with their feet, in comical attitudes, the grapes deposited in it. They were singing a ballad suitable to the season, but differing in tune and time from the one sung outside. It seemed that the measure was taken to suit the stamping of their feet. The women entered in procession; joined for a moment, the inside song, and deposited the contents of their baskets in larger ones, which, when filled were carried by strong men up to the tub. Four leather pipes hung at its bottom, communicating with large hogsheads to receive the fluid.

Out of respect, all stopped singing at our entering; but at a sign of the master they continued. It was delightful to hear how charmingly and tastefully those simple and ignorant people sang their mountain ballads, with no other knowledge than their own instinct, nor other guide than their own ears.

The sight was beautiful, but the air was so impregnated with intoxicating fumes, that in two minutes the ladies felt giddy, and we were obliged to go out. When we had returned to the court-yard, Mr. Errante called the overseer, or farmer, who was walking behind at a respectful distance. "Calogero, give the signal for leaving off work. They shall have a holiday. This evening there will be macaroni provided for all. And let them get ready for a grand dance."

The overseer applied to his lips a horn which hung at his side, and gave three tremendous blasts. "Let us stop a moment at the portico, and look at the scenes," said Mr. Errante.

Scarcely had the echo repeated from the hills the last shrill sound, before all the scattered multitudes of different sexes, ages, and colors, began to approach towards the central point—the Hall.



The happy news announced by Calogero in a loud voice were received with joyous exclamations and hurras.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Errante; "allow us to show you to your apartments, and, till dinner, au revoir."



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### FETE CHAMPETRE.

I BEG to be excused from telling of dinners, delicacies, wines, and toasts. They are tedious, commonplace things.

"Let us adjourn to the granaries," said Signor Errante at the end of our meal.

The granaries were spacious, quadrangular structures on the ground floor of the farm house, with high roofs, and ventilated with many latticed windows. One of these places had been transformed in two hours as if by magic, to a festival room with the usual garlands of leaves and flowers.

At one end of the room a platform was raised, forming a semi-circle, on which were placed arm-chairs, and a small round table. A table composed of smooth boards, placed side by side on wooden horses, extended the whole length of the room.

Two barrels of wine were placed on stands at the two corners near the entrance. Pitchers and tin cups were on stools near by.

It was now dark, and the room was supplied with light from one hundred earthen lamps in the form of the ancient Egyptian ones, standing on rows of nails driven into the wall in two regular files.

Men and women had donned their best garments of fantastic gay colors. All were decked with wreaths and bouquets of flowers, and all were standing silently leaning against the



walls when two men entered the door carrying a smoking caldron hanging by a chain to a cross-beam. Then a second, a third, and a fourth pair entered, with each a similar load. Two advanced to the extremities of the table, and two in the centre, and at the same time emptied upon the table the contents of their caldron. A cloud of smoke obstructed the view of the macaroni and the carriers, who were managing, by the help of large wooden spoons, to spread this article of food over the surface of the board, from head to foot.

Soon after, twelve men came in, each carrying a grater in the left hand, and a large piece of cheese in the right. Dividing themselves, six on each side of the table, they began in a regular, slow march, to grate the cheese on the smoking viand. As soon as the graters had arrived at the upper end, the expectants advanced slowly from the wall, each taking a place standing before the table. They then raised their hands to cross themselves, and directly began to eat the food spread before them.

Each one extended his right hand taking a quantity, more or less, of macaroni from the surface where the grated cheese had fallen. His left hand was uplifted so as to prevent the food from falling and staining his apparel. The surface eaten up, the graters, situated now at equal distances, busied themselves in pouring a continual shower of powdered cheese on the so much cherished dish, until the boards were left without the least trace of macaroni.

Four large dishes of sausages came afterward, with baskets of bread, and the twelve men went round with six pitchers of water and six of wine, and carrying tin cups.

Twelve large water melons were finally placed on the table, which in less time than it is told, were cut, quartered, sliced, and eaten.

We were sitting in the arm chairs on the platform, and, in order not to place them under any constraint, and to appear



rather as their guests than mere spectators, we partook during their repast of sugar plums and coffee, which we found on the round table.

The meal over, the women went to a fountain outside of the room to wash their hands, whilst the men took each a board or a trivet forming the table. In a few moments the place was cleared.

Ten minutes elapsed, and at the sound of flutes, a violin and a guitar, all the party re-entered, two by two, singing; each couple holding the ends of a garland.

As the first couple arrived near the platform, they stopped, which the others also did, as they came up, forming two rows, the women on the right, and the men on the left. Raising their hands, they formed with the garlands a bower of leaves and flowers. A girl of eighteen, followed by four of nearly the same age, advanced under this canopy. These five children of the fields were very handsome, but the foremost was indeed remarkable for the delicate beauty, sweetness, and intelligence of her features. Her complexion was of that soft tinge so characteristic of women of the south. Her large, dark, and lustrous eyes, were shaded by arching brows. Her face was rather oval, her mouth small, her lips red, her cheeks rosy. Her glossy raven hair fell in rich curls over her neck and shoulders. Her countenance wore an expression of languid sweetness. A wreath of orange blossoms distinguished her from all others. She was indeed the acknowledged belle. Arriving at the platform, she advanced, curtsied, and presented the ladies with four bouquets of chosen flowers. The other four beauties presented small, elegantly woven baskets filled with grapes, ears of wheat, and sprigs of olive with their fruit.

The belle tried to deliver a prepared little speech, but the words failing her, she hung her head, blushing deeply.

Signora Errante went to her relief by saying :



“ Ursula, we thank you all. Favor me by accepting this in token of friendship.”

So saying, she gave her a silk bag full of almond and pistachio sugar plums.

Ursula took it and bowed. All retreated through the same bower, and went to place the present on a chair.

They then defiled in circles, singing a song, at the end of which the men filled their pockets with the sweets to make presents to their sweet-hearts. Dances began with great animation and cheerfulness.

The votaries of dancing academies would certainly have been shocked at the awkward steps, but they could not have denied that the gracefulness of the girls, and the symmetric and varied figures of their dances, made it altogether enchanting.

I was sitting near Signorina Serafina, and communicated to her my observations.

“ See how beautiful that girl is ; look what sweet glances that couple exchange with each other ; those seem two ardent lovers.”

My heart was full. With a deep sigh I said, “ Oh, how I wish I were beloved ! I am wretched, unhappy.”

“ Why,” she asked with surprise.

“ I love—oh, I love ardently—and—and—”

“ Please continue,” she said, assuming a serious countenance.

I proceeded ; “ yes, my love has no bounds ; it makes me delirious, whilst the beloved object so near me is either indifferent or spurns my love.”

I saw her tremble. After a while she bent a little towards me, and in a suppressed, agitated voice said :

“ Ungrateful one ! You do not deserve to be loved.”

That was sufficient to put me in a trance of happiness. At this moment a bustling and humming in the room startled me from my sweet reveries.



The music, dancing, singing, had all ceased. and consternation reigned in the place.

Men surrounded a spot looking on the floor. Mr. Errante and Mr. Grasso frowned.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"Something," said Mrs. Errante, "which is nothing in itself, but through the superstition of this people becomes a real evil. One of those lamps has fallen, spilling the oil on the floor and on the dress of the belle."

"Let me see," interrupted Onofrio, "if I can break the omen."

He took a pitcher containing one gallon of wine, and a glass, and elbowed his way toward the gloomy group. "Come boys," he began, "drink my health."

The men looked at him with deference, but only answered with an ominous shake of their heads.

Onofrio managed adroitly in turning round to drop the pitcher on the floor as if by chance. The noise of the fall on the marble pavement and the splashing of the wine all around, aroused anew the joviality of the assembly.

Onofrio took another pitcher, and dipping a bundle of flowers in the wine went round sprinkling men and women. The music began to play again and the inmates of the ball-room continued their dances.

"Would you be so kind," I asked Onofrio, "as to tell me what all this means?"

"The lower class of people," he began, "have a superstition that spilling oil is a bad omen, and if it happens at a ball or at a wedding it portends misfortunes and death. On the contrary if it chances that wine is spilt the omen is reversed. It foretells weddings and happiness. Seeing these people so miserable it came to my mind to try to drown the few drops of bad omen in two gallons of good omen—and I succeeded."



At the end of every dance the assembly retired standing to the walls.

Two stalwart fellows then advanced into the middle of the floor with an air of dignity and self-importance that Tasso, certainly did not bear in the Capitol of Rome. These two votaries of Apollo regaled us with stanzas on beauty—on love—on Bacchus—on Ceres—etc.

We could not look for erudition, of course, in illiterate poets ; but the thought, the will, the measure, the sweetness, and the easiness of their extemporaneous compositions were such, as would excite the envy of many so called poets, who shock our ears with their limping verses.

A hail storm was the only sign of applause. Poor poets ! If the girls were pleased with their verses, they advanced and threw a handful of hard sugar-plums on the face of the poets ; and the more pleased they were, the more strength they used in shooting their missiles.

Still those sweets were not wasted. A swarm of urchins gathered at the door of the rustic ball room, gazing with anxious looks, and praying Jupiter for the success of the poets. At the clatter of the sugar plums on the floor they started like a flock of starving chickens, picked them up to the last one, and retired in order. Those good and innocent people had an evening of real enjoyment. The most surprising feature of all the feast was the decent and quiet demeanor of both sexes.

Wine was plenty and unrestricted ; but no man was seen to lose his usual sobriety.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### IT IS NOT ALWAYS SUNSHINE.

It was the first of November, when returning from the country I ran to my mother, flung my arms around her neck, and covered her face with kisses. I was full of life and joy. The month of October had run swiftly through enjoyments, pleasure-parties, and love.

Miss Serafina and I were plighted to each other. Lawyer Grasso countenanced our love by not noticing our courtship, and by treating me in a kind and affectionate manner.

I was in my mother's arms when my brothers came in to greet me. At the same time two delicate tiny hands came from behind and covered my eyes.

"Guess," said one of my brothers.

I touched the delicate hands and arms, and said, "Antonietta, my sister."

She embraced me with a storm of kisses

"How is it," I asked my mother, "that she is out of the convent?"

I knew that young ladies never left except at the completion of their education.

In a sad but calm manner my mother said, "We will speak of it by and by."

After dinner I was summoned to my mother's room. She was paler than usual. All her lineaments expressed suffering. I took a seat and looked at her in silence. She gazed at me earnestly.



Being unable to endure the painful silence which had now lasted some minutes, I broke it by saying :

“ My dear mother, you alarm me. What is the matter ? ”

“ Be calm, my son. Arm yourself with that fortitude worthy of your father’s child. Your courage will impart strength to me. I am at a loss how to broach the subject.

“ It is eight years already since your sire paid his debt to his country by dying in her cause. Hitherto, by selling piece by piece my jewels, I have contrived to afford to you the means of education and comfort. Now the widow has become powerless. The mother has sold her last trinket ! The plate is gone ; there only remain to us the silver spoons and forks, and these I shall use to buy bread. That is the reason why I took Antonietta from the convent. My greatest grief is not to be able to pay the one hundred dollars for your diploma. I could apply for that to my relatives——”

“ Never ! ” I interrupted. “ I would rather enlist than beg of any one, and so much the less of relations who have forgotten us since the death of my father.”

My mother stopped me with a wave of her hand, saying, “ Please interrupt me not. Even if for love of you I should descend to such an act, my humiliation would avail you nothing. Even if you could procure a diploma, you would have to attend the hospital for two years, and after that practise one year with a physician of repute as it is customary. Thus, after three years you would be entitled to practice your profession, but still be a practitioner without patients. Thus you may perceive that in our needy condition you must look to something else.”

Choked by her sobs, she could not continue. Each word she had uttered had fallen like a drop of molten lead upon my heart. I was not prepared for such overwhelmingly sad intelligence. Her discourse had, like an earthquake, demolished all the aerial castles of future happiness which I had built in



my youthful imagination. My heart failed me and I felt annihilated. My mind was a chaos.

A tear glistened in my mother's eye ; it trembled, it dropped on her cheek and thence to her bosom, the heaving of which showed the struggle her mind was undergoing.

This tear gnawed at my very heart's core. It called loudly and imperiously on me to awake to filial duty. With nerves and muscles set, and with a strong determination I exclaimed :

" Cheer up, dearest of mothers ! I am strong and healthy. I shall work by day and by night, not only to support you, but to earn that diploma which was the summit of your heart's aspirations. Because of my wickedness you could not have the satisfaction of calling me doctor last year. But where there is a will there is a way. You will know, sweet mother, of what the strong will of your son is capable."

My words overpowered the forced calmness, and a flood of tears came to relieve her mental sufferings.

" You must go and see the bishop," she said when a little calmed. " I have seen him, and he has promised to guide you."

With a mind distracted by strong emotion, after kissing my mother's hand, I went to my room.

All my aspirations after renown and a brilliant future had vanished. Once I fostered those feelings for self's sake—but now ? Oh, now it was a different affair ! Now I loved. All the aims of future life were centred in the object of my love. Whilst dreaming of great achievements, and full of the hope of meriting the soul-coveted prize of my struggles in life, a single word had damped—nay, destroyed all my happy visions. Serafina ! Ah, Serafina was lost to me !

I had to seek an employment for a living. I had passed from a free, noble profession to the state of a low, passive employee. Now I felt it to be a sin even to raise my thoughts to my adored Serafina.



I bitterly blamed myself as the author of my own misfortunes. If I had not neglected the wholesome admonitions of my mother, which recommended abstinence even from the slightest approach to youthful inconsiderateness, and which ought to have received implicit obedience from me, I should not have lost a year of study. That year in which folly and inexperience had involved me in an intricate and perilous labyrinth, had cost me the loss of my diploma. If it had been otherwise, now, though in restricted circumstances, I could, with the help of my energetic will, cut my way through to my desired terminus.

These thoughts preying on my mind, embittered in my heart the painful sense of the loss of Serafina. I felt myself a degraded man. After several hours of conflicting thoughts and sorrows, physical strength gave way and I fell asleep chewing in my mouth the bitter word—an employment.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### EMPLOYEE.

THE mere thought of seeking an employment had filled me with an intensity of grief that bordered upon delirium. This agony was stirred in my bosom by the idea of becoming dependent upon a government, which I cordially hated, and by the perception of the abject servitude in which the employées live.

In order that my feelings may not seem exaggerated, I will give here a short view of the organization of employments; leaving the reader to judge for himself.

The absence of commerce and the fettering of industry and arts, leave a great part of the people without the means of subsistence. A specious relief is afforded by the countless



employments under the government, where burden is in reality thereby increased, though somewhat better distributed.

The taxes are calculated, all comprised at eighty per cent on the yearly produce. This enormous imposition is not collected in the same way as taxes are collected in well regulated governments. Besides the taxes on real estate, which is the artery distributing them to all the veins of the social body, there are taxes on articles of consumption, which gravitate mostly to the poor.

Let us take for example the wheat. The farmer pays a tax for the soil, tax for the water, tax for the wheat, and tax when it is converted into flour. The baker pays a tax on his shop, tax on the apertures ; that is : so many francs for as many windows or openings of any kind, and tax for the license to sell the bread.

In the same manner are organized the taxes on wine, on oil, on meat, and other staple articles. Each of these taxes has a separate administration ; having each an army of overseers, secretaries, book-keepers, collectors, agents, guards and patrols. Nearly all these persons are employed by the government, at a very scanty salary. Thus the most of these poor wretches exposed to the inclemency of the seasons, and often risking their lives in collision with reckless smugglers, can scarcely give a piece of bread to their children.

There are, besides the Lottery, the Custom House and Post Office, many other impositions called *indirect taxes*, for which thousands of men are employed.

The judiciary system is another means for giving employment, and for plunder. Besides the great number of lawyers, counsellors and attorneys, there are justices of the peace, the magistrates of Courts of the wards ; Civil Tribunals, Tribunal of Commerce, Courts of Appeal, Criminal Courts, and of the Supreme Court.

All of these magistrates have chancellors, secretaries, many



clerks, apprentices and ushers. To give an example: the Civil Tribunal of Palermo had four for chancellors, two secretaries, sixty clerks and fifty ushers.

Chancellors and secretaries, being magistrates, are fed with high salaries, whilst for the others there is no fear of their taking an indigestion.

The maintenance of this great mass of intelligent people, is required by the complicated organization of the judiciary system. Citations, appeals, defences, dissertations, sentences, must be written, and communicated to the parties. It is a game of wit and learning into which the learned members of the bar plunge with delight.

Reams of paper are written sometimes for a single law-suit

All those diatribes, besides being communicated reciprocally between the parties, must be inserted in the definitive sentence of the court, which must be legally communicated to the parties *ad literam*. I have seen many a sentence containing, more or less, two thousand pages of manuscript.

This writing mania is fostered by the requisition of the law, which forbids the admission of any defence that has not been communicated to every individual of the opposite party. By this system the immense quantity of paper, which in free countries is consumed by the press for literary and scientific works, is there wasted in law-suits. Literary works, if not nominally are virtually, entirely forbidden. On this consumption of paper rests the governmental plunder. In legal affairs it is prohibited to write on paper that has not a governmental stamp. Its price differs from a sixteenth of a dollar to one dollar and a half for every sheet, according to the importance of the matter, and the rank of the court. Besides, when this paper is rendered into any act, as a deed, a defence, or a sentence, the act is null if not signed by the royal receiver, who exacts a tax of from six to sixty American cents for every two pages. Such an imposition makes the expenses of a law-suit so enormous that it often surpasses the value of the property in contest.



Many abandon their claims, not being able to afford the expense of maintaining them. This imposition, on the plea of supporting the magistracy and the employés, pours into the coffers of the king large amounts of money.

The whole system of giving employments is a net of servitude in which the majority of the people is involved. It is an invention by which men are obliged to work at forging their own fetters. For a crust of bread they have to support the impositions of tyranny, which heavily weigh upon the community. Commerce, arts, and the heaven-favored earth are resources for them no more.

The most of the employés have a family to support, nay to keep from starvation. For that wretched class to speak against the oppressors is out of the question. Woe on them if they praise not to the skies every governmental act.

With rancor in their heart, each vies with the other in praising and hailing the king on every occasion. Each one knows that if he fails in this, the bread is withdrawn from the mouth of his children.

I beg my gentle reader to pardon me for having gone astray from my subject—I could not help it. Those who will stretch a sympathetic hand, and feel the palpitation of my bleeding heart, in talking of my poor dear country, will, I am certain, forgive my fault.

To return to my subject. The following morning, on seeing me, Bishop D. rose from his arm chair and hastened to greet me with a shake of the hand.

“Welcome back,” he said.

I could not return the compliment. My heart was dead to every joy.

Perceiving the state of my feelings, the bishop began a sermon on philosophy, on courage, and on exertions. Then he said to me that on the same morning he intended to accompany me to the President of the Court of Appeal, an old friend of



my father, in order to obtain employment for me in the Chancellory of the same Court.

He tried his best to keep up my courage ; explaining to me that it was a very decent civil employment. Perceiving that all his efforts to cheer me were of no avail, he turned to another subject, which he deemed would divert my attention ; but, alas, he did not know that it served to make matters worse.

He looked at me from head to foot, and with a merry chuckle said :

“ How is it ? To-day we do not look as foppish as usual. Just to-day that we are going to see President T. you are dressed like a sexton.”

“ What is the use,” I answered in a mournful tone. “ What is the use of dressing elegantly if I can no more keep up with the fashion ?”

My heart was almost breaking. The bishop noticed it and became thoughtful. After a while he commenced, saying :

“ World—world—human nature—youth—oh, youth ! If men would only think what dressing represents, they would be ashamed to make it a subject of pride. Dress, my young friend, is the badge of the criminal. It represents the loss of innocence, the mark of guilt, the doom of working hard with the sweat of our brow !”

“ You are right, eminent sir, but, unfortunately, men do not think of its origin, and of the sin of Adam now-a-days ; and they esteem the more those who are dressed the most.”

I did not tell him that with the idea of dressing elegantly, there was associated another object paramount in my heart.

The valet came in, announcing the carriage.

President T. was a short stout man, sixty years old. He had all the politeness of a courtier, and the dignity of a high magistrate. A man of great influence, he was generally respected. When the Bishop introduced me, he embraced me affectionately.



"Oh, the son of my dear doctor Balzani," he exclaimed. "Oh, if you knew how many tears my wife and my son shed when your father died! 'Papa,' he said to me, 'you are all-powerful, you can give liberty and condemn to death. Ah, do not let doctor Balzani die; restore him to us!' The boy did not know that his father also might have forfeited his life!"

This reception put new heart into me. I went there reluctantly, for I had not forgotten the reception of the Marquis Pasquali, and I expected something similar. I was agreeably surprised.

"Sit down here, Alfio," he said to me, pointing to the arm-chair where he had been sitting, "whilst I talk of something with our good friend, the Bishop of ——. Would you do me the favor to answer for me this long letter?"

I bowed assent, and after receiving my directions I went to work, whilst they retired to talk in whispers near the balcony. I understood that this was a kind of examination, and I tried to do my best.

I am certain that the Bishop spoke to him of my position and of my despondency. He read my letter, glancing continually at me and at the Bishop rather approvingly. Then he approached me, and stroking my cheek said:

"Bravo, my dear Balzani; you write with style and with good rhetoric. Your place should be the Secretary's, but that career is mean, and there is no hope of promotion. The chancellery is a better place for your future. But I can only employ you as an apprentice. You may make a living by copying law papers. There are clerks there of third, second, and first class, but those places are occupied by those who have passed public examination on law matters. You must study law above everything. You may one day become a chancellor, but to attain that you must be a *Doctor Utrinsque juris*—an LL.D. If you have self-esteem, the career before you is a good one."

I felt almost relieved, and thanked the President with all my heart. When we took leave the President said:



“Come often to see me, it will do you good.”

Thus I was installed as apprentice of the Chancellory of the great Court of Appeals. My first step in life.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### LOVE.

“WHAT is Italian love?” I have been asked many times. I do not feel competent to give a proper definition of it. But I will try to answer the question in such words as my heart prompts, and as nearly as I can, in accordance with my feelings and sentiments, at the time when the shafts of the merciless god pierced my youthful heart.

Love is a pure affection, unmingled and undefiled. It is a fire which burns without destroying; a happiness tinged with melancholy. It is a pleasure that enters into the heart, together with anguish, and intense anxiety. It is a grief that one caresses to detain it. It is a troublesome and at the same time a happy thought.

Pleasures, thoughts and dreams are all engrossed and monopolized by love. No other tenant can dwell in the heart that love sways with its tyrannical sceptre. It cows the brave and makes a hero of the coward. It is a crucible in which two opposite characters, melting, make a whole, more valuable and more enduring. Love is extravagant and unreasonable. Logics or rhetoric never guides the movements of its feelings. True love keeps a man always panting and restless. He hates society and solitude by turns.

The Italians love to excess. Their ardent passion is not dissimilar to the volcanoes which burn in their delicious land. They experience its aforesaid sensations in the extreme.



“We Italians fall in love in the church,” says one of our best modern writers.\* The enchanting melody of the organ, the perfume of frankincense, the angelic voices of invisible girls, enrapture and exalt our senses, and dispose our hearts to love. In that moment, if our eyes, which have been intoxicated with the beauties of a Madonna of Raphael, turn, and meet a type of that Madonna, they look up astonished to the image, doubting, if by a miracle, she has returned to life. But the image does not move. The maiden who resembles it, has with a glance quickened and almost choked the pulsations of our hearts. A change comes suddenly. The canvas of Raphael does not attract our attention any longer. In the maiden who can weep and smile we see the work of the Creator, and in loving the beauty we adore God. In this case, to the natural impetuosity of passion we join religious fervor. An acute fever invades fibres and bones. The arteries of our temples throb, as if they would burst; whirling fires flash before our eyes; a continuous ringing torments our ears, and we do not wish it to stop; the bosom heaves with frequent sighs . . . . . a glance has changed all.

Have you ever touched an electric conductor?—Have you felt that unpleasant thrill caused by the swift invasion of the subtle fluid into your nerves? The same feeling—but without the unpleasant part—a feeling of Paradise, overflows our nerves if the foot of the beloved one touches ours.

Such was approximatively the love which I felt. Now my dejection and my helplessness instead of diminishing it, added oil to the already burning fuel.

I worked every day in copying, and passed the evenings in the uncongenial study of the law. I tried to study very hard, but without my will the image of Serafina came to place itself between the code and my eyes. This portrait must not be understood literally, as the work of the artist. No young lady

\* Guerrazzi—Assedio di Firenze.



there allows herself to give to any one her likeness, except in case of an acknowledged betrothment. The portrait before my eyes was not a piece of stained ivory. No profane hand wrought it. It was a likeness which smiled and spoke to me alone. A masterpiece drawn by my heart on the tablet of my mind. Whilst lost to all other feelings but my delight, duty came like an incubus, to suffocate it, and to awaken me to reality. At first I rebelled against duty; but reason with her cold outstretched finger pointed at the book, whispering in my ear with stern accents—through this means thou shalt arrive at thy goal.

“Pardon,” I soliloquised, as if she were present. “Oh pardon, beloved one, put thyself aside for a while; it is in this book that I must find the way to reach thee.”

These visions returned again and again, every evening, until wearied I sought my couch, plunging in sweet and sad reveries, whose fluctuations cradled me to sleep.

When in the chancellory, I was serious and reserved. The clerks and apprentices made advances to me because I was befriended by the president, but in a gentle way I held them aloof.

One day lawyer Grasso came there on business. He was startled at seeing me there, writing at a desk, and with a faltering voice said: “What? you here, Mr. Balzani?”

“Yes, sir,” I answered, almost annihilated; “I have changed my mind and taken another career.” I was ashamed to be seen by him in my new situation. I felt as a man in a pillory.

After he had transacted his business, he saluted me in a cold distant manner, and went away. I felt thunderstruck. I knew the meaning of Mr. Grasso’s manners. I had foreseen that my change of social position would put a barrier between me and Serafina.

I had found a resource against overwhelming grief. It was



to go to Bishop D. And there I went in the afternoon. I related to him my heart-breaking grievances. He did not fail to inspire me with confidence in the future.

He was a great philosopher and had a true knowledge of the human heart. He concluded with stating the following alternatives of the case :

“The lady of your love either loves you truly or not. If she does, you must be sure she will wait until you have made advancement in your new career ; and be sure a father never succeeds in diverting a daughter from a true love. If she yields to persuasion, it means that she does not love you, and in this case, my noble boy,” (here he tossed up his head with hauteur) “in this case she does not deserve to be loved by you.”

The bishop by awakening my natural pride allayed in some degree the destructive violence of my helpless love.

I had not heard of her after our return from the country. After having received a regular invitation from her father, I had promised her to call early. But my position had changed and I deemed it wise not to go. The idea of being one too many has always been a kind of bug-bear in my life. I have preferred to be called rather a *strange* or a *proud* man than an intrusive one or a bore.

One month had passed. Measuring her love by my own, I thought that she should have written to me. I was angry. Here a strife began within me between my reason and my heart. The former maintained that the change of circumstances gave her just motive to break her engagement, and I had no right to pretend to its fulfillment. The latter proclaimed reason unjust and cruel, that Serafina was an angel, that she still loved me, and that true love is not the slave of circumstances. These struggles befell me twenty times every day, and always my heart carried the day, and reason went off discomfited.



I was in one of these moods one morning, when my friends, Ettore and Guiseppe came into my room.

“ Well, old boy,” shouted Ettore, “ what is become of you ? To have changed your career does not mean that you have to forsake your truest friends. We have been busy all this time preparing ourselves for the troublesome, annoying, preposterous formalities attendant on our receiving our diplomas.”

The unchanged manner of my friends made me feel for the first time the true test of friendship. Still I had made up my mind to cut short the intimacy with them, and answered that I worked hard the whole day, except one hour, when I went to the lectures on law, and that I studied in the evenings.

“ Nonsense,” said Guiseppe, “ you must not entirely absent yourself. To-morrow night we have a social party at our house and you must come ”

I thanked him heartily, but I refused to go, because I had very little time to study, and I would not miss my lesson.

The same morning when coming from the office, I went to kiss my mother's hand. She said to me, “ Here is a note for you, my son.”

I took it, and on reading the address I was near falling headlong on the floor. I felt a crimson flush ascending to my brow, and the room swimming round with me—I had recognized the hand-writing !

“ What is the matter with you ?” asked my mother with alarm.

“ Nothing, mother, only a slight indisposition.”

I drank a glass of water, and went to my room. I sat down. My anxiety was extreme ; it was a conflict of fear and joy. My hand trembled and could not hold the note. Perhaps that envelope contained a fatal sentence—perhaps a grace from heaven. I trembled in breaking the seal : only a few lines ; I could not fix my attention on their meaning. I fell into the arm-chair exhausted. A few minutes later I took up the paper again and read these simple lines :



"To-night I shall be at a soiree at Lawyer Nobile's, the father of our friend Mr. Guiseppe. I hope you will be there. I wish to have the pleasure of introducing you to my sisters. Your true friend, Serafina."

Beside myself with joy, I read this precious note over and over again perhaps a dozen times. As often I kissed it in rapture, and placed it next my heart. I kept it religiously as a talisman against sorrow, as the harbinger of a future happiness.

In the evening I went to the party. Serafina had without doubt enlisted the sympathy of her sisters in my cause. In taking my hand, and in expressing pleasure at my acquaintance, they betrayed feelings warmer than usual on introductions.

Serafina did not dance that evening, and I of course abstained. Her father went to play a game of chinola in another room. Whilst a grand quadrille was dancing I saw her sitting alone on a sofa and placed myself by her side.

Having taken a survey around the room she said to me in whispers :

"Alfio, dear, I am unhappy. My father has forbidden me to encourage you in any intimacy. You cannot call at our house. My heart is breaking. I cannot disobey my good father, but I swear to heaven on this spot that I shall never marry any other man. My father has the greatest esteem for you, but he is not above the social prejudice. You must love him for my sake, Alfio. My brothers will not meddle with it. My sisters—oh, my sisters already love you. They are women, Alfio, and they look at you as the saviour of their pet sister. Oh, something whispers in my heart that you will elevate yourself, and we shall be happy!"

I felt indeed happy at that moment. "I thank you, my guardian angel," I replied with emotion; "but, reflect, the time is long and many circumstances may befall. How can I



have news of you to allay the fire in my heart, and to prevent sorrow wearing me away inch by inch ?”

“ I have an old nurse,” she replied, “ who dotes on me. She will be our messenger.”

At this moment the quadrille ended, the social circulation began its buzzing again, and I mingled with the crowd happier than ever.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE RELIQUARY.

As BISHOP D. had always been the faithful friend into whose ear I poured the overflowing bitterness of my heart, now that I felt in a high state of happiness, I did not delay going to him, to tell the tale of my bliss.

Entering the library I found there the housekeeper and her niece, standing at the side of the bishop, and bending with attention over something in his hands. Fearful of intrusion I was making a hasty retreat, when the bishop, raising his eyes, exclaimed :

“ Oh, Balzani, you come in time to see something valuable.”

The two females retired with a courtesy.

The bishop continued to pass from one hand to another, and to turn on all sides a large reliquary, examining it minutely. A little while after he handed it to me saying :

“ The Count, my nephew, just returned from a tour, brought this to me from Rome. What do you think of it ?”

The reliquary was of an oval form, six inches in diameter. A narrow frame of gold, surrounded with a wreath of silver flowers, exquisitely wrought and studded with rubies, emeralds and topazes, encompassed it. The back, also of silver, was crossed by two green silk strings, made fast in the centre by a wax seal bearing the mark of the Fisherman.



In the inside, there were, on a black ground, a quantity of small pieces of bones, placed in regular order. Each one had a diminutive label, written in Latin underneath.

The tiny inscriptions bore the names of the so called original proprietors of the bones.

Those in the centre, and most prominent to the right of the beholder, bore the names—ST. PETER—ST. PAUL.

After having observed the beauty of the workmanship, I proceeded to peruse the several names written therein. I began to muse.

“What do you think of it?” again asked the bishop, who appeared to be as enraptured as a boy who has just been presented with a new toy.

“A masterpiece,” I replied, “and very costly indeed.”

“And very interesting?” he added in an interrogative tone.

I avoided answering by asking, “What is the meaning of this seal?”

“It is,” he said, “the mark of authenticity.”

“Which means; they come authentically from the hands of the Pope.”

“No, sir,” said he in a quaint manner. “The seal of the Fisherman certifies as genuine, the bones of these saints; according to the names placed underneath.”

I kept silent. I knew the bishop's principles. Several times he had tried to quiz me, by asking crooked questions, with a straight serious countenance, which at my answer had changed into a chuckle and a caress on my cheek. But in this instance, the joy depicted on his face, for the present he had received, united with the idea of his being a bishop, made me reserved; lest I should offend him.

“Well, master Alfio,” he asked in a quizzing tone, fixing his sparkling grey eyes on me, “do you find anything to gainsay?”

I felt piqued by this new question, and replied boldly. “If



the bones of all the saints, shut up in this reliquary, are as genuine as those of Peter and Paul, my humble opinion is, that the whole is a living lie."

"That is just like you," interrupted the bishop, in a manner which left me in doubt whether it was in anger or in mirth.

"What reasons can you give," he continued, "to set at naught this reliquary?"

I felt very ill at ease, and for a moment the thought of giving up the point crossed my mind.

But it is natural with me when once engaged in a topic in which I believe myself to be on the right side, not to be arrested by any slight cause. So I said to myself:

"Now I am in for it," and ransacking my memory I answered:

"There is no history, which gives us any evidence that Saint Peter ever saw Rome. The acts of the Apostles do not speak of it. From the epistles of Saint Paul we can barely infer that he was once with Peter at Antioch: but there is not a word about seeing him in Rome. Paul was in Rome on the plea of being a Roman citizen, but Peter had no such claim. We find the news of Paul's death in the epistle of Saint Clement to the Corinthians, in which he says, '*Proclaimer of the faith in the east and west he received in the latter place the reward of his faith.*' Thus we must rather think that he died in Spain and not in Rome.

"If the death of Paul in Rome is doubtful, that of Peter is almost morally impossible. How can they claim to have found his bones there? It is a gross imposition. It is all nonsense and I am afraid I shall end by believing nothing."

The bishop looked at me amiably, and after pressing his lips in his usual way and a few nods of his head, said:

"You have read a great deal on this subject; and perhaps too much for your age.

"The warmth of your mind, the impetuosity of your character, and the lack of cool reflection, which is only acquired by



age, and which serves to put everything in its proper light, give you such confused ideas about religion, that I am afraid, some of these days it will drag you into absolute infidelity.

"Now hearken to me. The Christian religion is holy and true. Men have for their own interest disfigured it, and made of it such a medley, that one who is not endowed with keen intellect, so as to sift the pure grain of God from the bad seeds that men have mixed with it, is in danger of going to certain perdition.

"Peter and Paul were two good Apostles; both possessed with the Holy Ghost. They both worked in the vineyard of the Lord. As for the bones and miracles, we must use a charitable silence, and leave to God the punishment of those men who have made a trade of them."

"But how is it," I interrupted, "that the church of Rome having been founded by Saint Paul, the Pope claims to be the successor of Peter?"

"This is really a funny thing," answered the bishop, "which I will explain to you, in as few words as possible.

"The church instituted by Peter, did not differ a great deal from Judaism. It retained the circumcision, and the Jewish ceremonial relative to eatables, festivals, and rites. Paul carried the doctrine to a higher standard. He saw the human race degraded and fallen in darkness, and preached Jesus as a new regenerating light. Instead of preaching the exaggerated virtues of Judaism, he spoke of useful and humanizing virtues. He inculcated equality, chastity, education and general freedom, and formed a discipline, new and analogous to his doctrine."

"Peter taught on the principles of communism—Paul, seeing the impossibility of such perfection, preached moral equality amongst men, and the duty of beneficence and charity.

"Notwithstanding this difference of rites, both branches of Christians agreed in the main point.

"When the Apostles died, the followers of Peter became jeal-



ous of those of Paul. The latter had spread the humanizing religion everywhere. The churches of Rome, of Ephesus, and in general all those of Greece and Asia Minor were established by Paul; whilst the followers of Peter had remained confined to a limited region. Thus the Jewish Christians, out of envy, began to call Paul every kind of name, even a deserter of the synagogue.

“Several writers of the first ages are of opinion that the Jewish Christians, in order to counteract the doctrine of Paul and to check the influence of his followers, interpolated the Gospel of Matthew, adding what appears the answer of Jesus, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.*

“Reading the other three Evangelists, and particularly John, who was present at the colloquy, I observe that they omit the above said answer of Jesus.

“Even Saint Justinus, who wrote in the middle of the second century, quoting several times that episode, omits it. He had an interest in everything that forms the base of religious hierarchy, and ought to have been careful not to neglect such an important part of the colloquy. But the best evidence of the untruthfulness of those words, reported as of Christ, is found in the same Gospel. When the Apostles asked Jesus who was to sit at his right hand, he answered, ‘Whosoever shall be great among you, shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.’

“In another place he says :

“‘But be not ye called Rabbis, for one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called masters : for one is your Master even Christ.’

“Time elapsed and the Jewish Christians, who had made so much noise against Paul, finding themselves few in number, joined in the doctrine and rights of the majority.

“Thus you see, all Christians are literally the followers of Paul.

“But the Popes, though originally followers of Paul, make



use of the interpolation made by the Jewish Christians against Paul to usurp an authority that Jesus Christ never intended to give. See of what ambition is capable !

“ I have not told you this, without a reason. I feared that if you found out by yourself such a contradiction in the Gospel with the excitability of your brain, you might have become an infidel.

“ You must separate religion from discipline ; the word of God from the deeds of man ; and stick to the former. Holding by this rule you will find yourself always happy.

“ I repeat to you again, when you have difficulties about religion come to me immediately.”

“ I must confess to you,” I said, “ that the reading of Voltaire, Dupuis, Volney and some other writers, had shaken my religious faith and disturbed the peace of my mind.

“ A strong determination to remain a believer in Christ, compelled me to study the matter thoroughly. But the deeper I went into the complicated maze, the more puzzled I found my mind.

“ My heart was distressed, when one evening, reading for the third time the conversion of Paul, I found to my heart’s content, the clue to the future rest of my conscience.

“ Ah !” exclaimed the bishop, “ what did you discover in it so strongly convincing, as to fortify your faith ? Please tell me all about it.”

“ Our religion,” I continued, “ has its foundation in the belief of the bible. Philosophers, armed with the weapons of history and geology, make their first attack on its truthfulness.

“ The reading of their works produced in my mind such a puzzle, that I could not help perceiving it was leading me fast into infidelity.

“ Frightened at the thought, my first impulse was to burn the books, but youthful self-esteem whispered in my heart that I could confute them.



"My first essay of confutation was—Jesus Christ cannot be an impostor, because his advent was predicted by all the Prophets.—But the philosophers say—He appropriated the prophecies to himself.

"This, I thought, might be true, but the testimony of the Apostles? As for this they answer with a thorough knowledge of human nature. Interest and fanaticism generally govern the life of man. Being poor and obscure, the Apostles were contented enough to acquire any kind of celebrity. Even if they were in good faith, it is notorious how, under the influence of fanaticism men believe as real what is the work of imagination, and they often finish by throwing away the object of all aspirations—life itself."

"Hitherto," interrupted the bishop, who perhaps was becoming as weary as my reader, "hitherto I do not see what Paul has to do with all this."

"I am coming to the point," I continued, "What is said about the Apostles cannot be applied to Paul."

"Paul was a learned and powerful man."

"Disciple of the celebrated Rabbi Gamaliel, he devoted himself to theology with success."

"As the newly rising religion tended to encroach upon his interest, he became its most fierce enemy. Whilst going to Damascus to persecute the infant sect, God calls him in the storm, and lo, he becomes at once the leader of the Christian religion! This miraculous conversion surpasses all philosophy. The very knowledge of human nature employed by the Philosopher to level religion to the earth, places it upon the pinnacle of truth. The moral and material position of Paul commanded him to go against the new religion. Except a few puerile hints, the philosophers keep silent about this. They are not able to find any logical reason to question the conversion of Paul, besides there was nothing that could benefit him, to induce him to a change of life.



“In truth what could he gain by becoming the defender of a sect poor and persecuted? Some might say he was frightened by the storm, and the words uttered by God were perhaps the effect of the derangement of the mind produced by terror. But Paul was one of those strong-minded philosophers who are not subject to such momentary weakness. And what gives the *final* confirmation to the miracle is that the soldiers who followed him heard exactly the same words and gave witness of it.

“To conclude, I say that God saw that the conversion of Paul was essential to religion; that without this the religion of Christ would be to speculative minds a doubtful matter, and that we must be thankful to the Almighty for having in Paul the main pillar of faith.”

At this moment the valet announced that dinner was ready, and I was forced to go *a far penitenza*—to do penance at table, as the Bishop was wont to say.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A HAPPY END.

Six years had passed away. Six years of work and study; six years of anguish, of hope, and despair. My friends' behavior towards me had been constant and equal, but I had widened the intervals of our meetings. Our old servant Rosa was dead, and my poor, noble mother had assumed all the housework herself. Two of my brothers had found employment in the administration of the royal lottery, and the youngest studied music, for which he had early shown a special inclination. My handsome sister, in the bloom of her youth, assisted my mother. The Bishop of —— had continued to be my counsellor and guide.



These six wearisome years would have been insufferable to me if love had not mixed with them its pangs, its sweets, and its romance. There is a law in that country that no one can marry without the written consent of his parents, or if they are dead of his grand-parents. This legislative rule has its good and its bad side. It is a law which tends to promote filial respect and veneration. It prevents at the same time the ruin which might befall a youth through warmth of feelings and inexperience of mind. As a compensation to this paternal authority, fathers cannot dispose at will but of half of their valuables and property, the other half being entailed in equal portions on the children.

The obnoxious side of this law develops itself in the case of tyrannical fathers. There are men, who, to suit their own caprices, deviate from the line of rectitude by forbidding their children's innocent love.

“ Parents have flinty hearts.”

This case is foreseen by the law. The son or daughter who is thus tyrannized over by his parents, arriving at the age of twenty-one, may ask the civil tribunal for the permission of marriage.

This magistrate, weighing the reasons on which the parents ground their opposition, and not finding them based upon the principles of public and private morality, raising themselves to paternal authority, award the marriage permission.

I have seen in my life very few of these cases; for, thank God, in that blessed land unnatural parents are as rare as comets.

In my case, Lawyer Grasso was right. I was poor and no near prospect was before me of attaining a position that would enable me to support his daughter in the manner in which she had been reared. Therefore he could not countenance a familiarity, and foster and encourage a love which could but make both miserable. Thus instead of owing him a grudge, I



felt the value of his motive, and my respect for him suffered no diminution.

Prohibitions make of love a true romance. How the young people sharpen their wits to find ways to see the object of their love. How many devices and plots, how many schemes are planned to meet, as if by chance, the beloved one, or to hear the music of her voice ! What a thrill the heart feels at the rustle of a garment, or at the possession of a flower that she has touched ! The heart is sometimes refractory to the dictates of the upright mind. Serafina and I both acknowledged the justice of her father's conduct, but we loved, ardently loved, and we could not help studying the means of adding fuel to the already devouring fire.

In the gloomy hours of midnight, when stillness and silence reigned over the city, only interrupted now and then by the heavy footfalls of the police patrol, I stole like a house-breaker through the maze of narrow, crooked streets. How delightful was the sight of that old dark mansion. What a holy trepidation I felt in approaching those walls. The very air in which they were bathed seemed to me full of perfume and of enchanting genii.

The whistling of a quail was our signal. The creaking of a window sash on the second floor made my heart thrill with joy and trepidation. Two hours passed swiftly in the alternation of fear, of being discovered by some of the inmates, and of joy at hearing her voice.

Six years passed in this painful yet rapturous state of aspirations.

Our conversation was almost always on trifling things, but these trifles were from her—this was enough. A flower, or a tiny note falling from high, was my prize after two hours of standing in a corner of the street with my neck stretched upwards. I contented myself with that subtle electricity, which almost every night passed from the ear to the heart. I



could not see her but once every week in the church, where she went accompanied by her sisters. Out of delicacy I forbade myself going to those houses where we used to meet.

Sometimes, in the afternoon, I passed the mansion ; I looked at the walls which contained my treasure, and I went away with my heart full of content. The purity of my love, the reliance in her faith, and the confidence of success, were so strong that I never felt dejected.

One night I went home at two o'clock, and I found my mother in my room, kneeling, with her head bent on the bed. I was in a flush of joy because I had been presented with a lock of hair. In seeing my mother I was disconcerted.

I kissed her hand, and hung down my head like a malefactor.

" So late, my son ?" she said calmly.

I could not answer. I was abashed.

" I hope it will be all right," she continued. " I know everything. Your midnight rambles made me uneasy. I went to the bishop and became aware of your attachment. May God bless you.

" What I feel sad for is, that you confide the secret of your heart to a stranger and not to me. Is there any truer friend in the world than a loving mother ?"

I felt the weight of her reproach and could not answer.

I felt my love criminal with regard to her. A mother who had sacrificed everything for my education, naturally expected a requital when success attended my career. And I, ungrateful one, thought of loving another, and to marry, even before I had the means of supporting a wife ! But my mother's noble heart was superior to interested feelings, and instead of retaliation, I found a friend who in some hours of despondency cheered me by talking of Serafina, and of future success.

As chance would have it, a place of third class clerk became vacant in the chancellory, at that time.



President L. warned me to prepare for a public examination. The day prescribed arrived. I went trembling to the hall of audience of the Great Court of Appeal. Two Presidents and the Attorney General were the examiners. Six lawyers presented themselves to compete with me.

The law points they gave us for themes were very difficult. six hours were allotted to us to write on the points. I felt a cold perspiration run from my brow. My mental faculties were dimmed. I was sure that those lawyers knew more of law matters than I did.

That day was the day of the crisis of my life. Not only was my future career concerned in it, but, Serafina. Ah, that day had to decide either my happiness or my despair.

To be brief, at the end of the six hours, I gave my writing, and as fortune would have it, it was proclaimed the best of all.

The news of my success spread and all my friends came to congratulate me.

Lawyer Grasso had remained during these six years a little cool, but had not dropped my acquaintance. On this occasion he came also, and giving me a warm shake of the hand, said to my mother, "I have always thought that Mr. Balzani would succeed in any career he might undertake."

Two days elapsed and Serafina told me that her father was well disposed towards me, and that I could send my mother to propose.

To make a long story short, after six years of pangs and sufferings, on the 19th of November, 1836, I was blessed with the hand of one of the most wise, charming, and loving of maidens.

The bishop of . . . . united us. The father, brothers, and sisters of my dear Serafina united to obtain from me a promise, never to leave their house.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### EIGHT MONTHS OF MARRIED LIFE.

THE happiness I enjoyed for eight months no pen can describe. Those who have experienced the blessings of requited affection, can easily comprehend how swiftly the months, one after another, glided away.

The family of Mr. Grasso was composed of two married sons, one a lawyer and the other a judge, and of five daughters. The first, a wise and excellent lady, was married to a doctor of medicine. She performed in the house the part of a mother in place of their deceased one. The other sisters were three young ladies whose candid and affectionate qualities were to be envied indeed. The father doted on me, and the daughters vied with each other in kindness. Their bright, frank, honest faces, their ingenuous and unpretending attentions, and their sincere affection for me captivated my heart, and I felt as if I were among sisters, as if surrounded with good genii. I was happy ; happy in the full acceptation of the word.

I have always tried to drive out of my head what men call misfortunes. By dint of reflection I have forced my mind into the belief that mishaps are either things that must naturally befall in life, or the consequences of our own faults. This manner of thinking, united to a powerful will, has always helped me to conquer and master those direful events, which, with my keen sensibility and hot temperament, would to a certainty have brought me to distraction.

On the contrary, when happiness has knocked at my door (and such events are very few in the life of man), I have not



only welcomed it cheerfully, but I have tried by all means to prolong its residence ; expelling from my mind all other inmates which might interfere with it. Like a child who eats with parsimony his treasure of sugar plums, to make them last the longer, I have carressed happiness so as to prolong it as much as possible. Those petty trifles which intrude themselves to mar the full enjoyment of happiness, I have cast away as unfaithful servants.

I have done more. I have studied and succeeded in the acquisition of comparative happiness. This I have obtained by my strenuous efforts to keep the companionship of a good and tranquil conscience, and by sympathizing with those in a worse condition than myself. In my bodily and mental sufferings, forcing mirth for a while, I have arrived in the end at being truly mirthful, and allaying the intensity of my suffering.

One may form an opinion of the extent of my bliss, with such a disposition of mind, and surrounded as I was with tenderness and love. There was no instance that anything happened in the house, or was to be done, that my advice or opinion was not asked. Serafina's love and mine being naturally faithful and unselfish, there was never in our intercourse the least portion of that bickering which often occurs even among the most passionate lovers.

One evening returning from a small friendly soiree, I observed the countenance of my wife more serious than usual—rather stern. She was naturally serious ; a character just the reverse of mine, and that made me love her the more. I have always disliked doll-looking women, and felt an interest in those who had dignified manners. Serafina was queen-like.

I had passed the evening very merrily, jesting, blundering and sparkling with fun and frolic. Serafina sat at the supper-table, but would not take anything. This made me uneasy. I saw that something weighed on her mind. When we retired I asked :



"What is the matter with you, dearest, to-night?"

"I am not quite happy," she answered, with that same pure, grave, and gentle expression of her countenance which had touched my heart.

"Tell me, dearest, what makes you unhappy! Say the word. I will stake my life to see you happy," I answered with all the fervency of my love.

"You can do it," she answered, "without a great sacrifice. Excuse, my sweet friend, if I take the liberty of advising you. Your mirth in society exceeds the bounds of moderation. You trifle even on serious things; you show yourself as a light-headed man. People like fun and frolic, but they do not respect the man who does not impose respect. I know your worth, Alfio, and I can never feel happy until it is acknowledged by all."

I did not answer, but I looked at her sternly, rather to hold up man's dignity than anything else.

"Permit me," she said mildly, "I go to bid my father good-night," and she slowly left the room.

Reclining on a lounge, I fell into a brown study. A few minutes elapsed, and I felt a delicate hand stroking my hair. I turned my head and saw the face of my wife bending gracefully from behind with a sweet but timid smile.

"Have I offended you?" she said in a pleading tone. "If so, pardon, my dear husband."

"No," I answered, "my most wise wife. I have reflected that you are right. I shall endeavor to restrain my humor. It is not my fault, dearest, if I trifle on everything. I was once the strongest believer in goodness and truthfulness of man; nothing could induce me to believe that mankind were wicked. But the many times I have been deceived and undeceived have established in my mind a firm conviction of the general untruthfulness. So, giving vent to my naturally glad, elastic temper, I cannot help making light of everything."



Will you with certainty get an enemy ? Do good to some one, and you will have one."

" Alfio," she exclaimed with a frightend look, holding her two hands in an earnest, supplicating manner ; " no, Alfio, you are not a sceptic !"

I rose and pressed her to my bosom. The pulsations of her heart were so vehement that it pained me. I tried to kiss the fright out of her eyes, then said :

" How can I be sceptic holding in my arms the truest, and noblest thing God ever created. Moreover I have met with a very few good people, and those few I have found sterling."

Regaining her usual composure she said, " please sit down, my friend. I do not pretend to argue with you about the goodness or badness of mankind. Let us admit for a moment that men in general are naturally bad. Is it right for us to put ourselves on the pedestal of censure, and scoff at the bad tendencies of human nature ? What are we, Alfio ? Are we not human ? The very knowledge of our nature ought to make us charitable and feel sympathy for the frail man. Why did the Savior come into this world ? Oh dear, dear husband, reflect on it and make me happy !"

These few but very pointed observations of Serafina's penetrated my soul, and made me conceive the duty of working indefatigably to better the moral condition of man. My not too elevated opinion of them, made me more benevolent, and more forbearing to those faults innate in human nature.

Thenceforward I have done good even unto my most bitter enemies, not because I expected gratitude, but only for good's sake.

After that night I studied to restrain my excessive cheerfulness. And I had to exert all the strength of my will to succeed.

Thus I made my wife completely happy. She paid me back by endeavoring to become more gay, and by studying to divine and anticipate all my wishes.



It is not true, that the love of two opposite characters cannot have a long duration. The true pure love melts them both, as the crucible melts gold and copper, adding solidity to the one and value to the other.

In trying to study each other's tendencies, and to modify their own in their divergencies, two lovers render their affection inextinguishable.

Thus an excellent woman made me the most happy man that ever existed.

What an inestimable treasure is a good woman. Oh, if men knew how to appreciate this treasure, bestowed upon them by the Almighty, how many sorrows would be spared to them, and how many souls would escape perdition!

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## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### TERROR.

THE scourge that the Almighty had raised from the interior of Asia to punish the iniquity of man, had already traveled through Europe and fixed its station in the beautiful city of Naples. We all perceived that it was at our gate and that we could not avoid the terrible visitation. The daily news of its ravages had filled the mind of the most courageous with consternation.

It being a new species of disease, we were all busy in studying from the daily reports, its phases, symptoms, and the remedies used. This concentration of mind on the subject naturally increased the panic. The preparation made by the government of vast hospitals, drugs, and all sorts of implements and conveyances for the sick and the dead, raised the panic into terror.

Day and night the only topic was the Cholera. From the



highest to the lowest, the cholera was the paramount thought. In the court and the work-shop, in the palace and the humble abode, the only subject of conversation was the cholera.

One day, going to the chancellory, I met my friend Domenico, who, with a frightened look asked me :

“ Well, Alfio, what about the cholera ? ”

“ They say,” I answered, “ that it is making ravages in Naples ; but we must not be scared at the evil before it comes.”

“ Do you know what the ruffian has done ? ”

“ Who is the ruffian ? ” I queried.

“ The king, of course,” he exclaimed, “ who else can be the ruffian ? He has been betrothed to a daughter of Austria, and he chose this time to solemnize his wedding. In fact, he sent for her ; and, two days ago, whilst the city of Naples is in such deep mourning, and nothing is met in the streets but cartloads of dead, his abominable palace was gay with splendid pageant-ries and with the revelry of a sumptuous feast ! ”

I looked at him and laughed.

“ Why, Alfio ! ” he exclaimed. “ Alfio, man ! By all that is precious, how can you laugh at such an abomination ; how can you laugh at such an insult to humanity ? He is worse than Nero ! ”

“ I laugh,” I answered seriously, “ because that at which you wonder is a thing consonant to a king’s nature. Kings have been, are, and will always be more loathsome than worms, more ferocious than wild beasts. Homer, speaking of a king, calls him people-eater. When Eumene, king of Pergamo, went to Rome, Cato, the Censor, kept aloof from him, saying, *kings by nature are carnivorous*, and we must moreover remark that Eumene was a staunch friend of the Romans, and that Flaminius and L. Scipio were indebted to him for victories gained over Nabis and Antiochus. May be the time will come when these wild beasts will be all hunted out of the earth ! ”

“ May God help us,” he said.



I answered "amen," and we parted,

A few days after this rencontre my father-in-law came home with an affrighted aspect.

"Do you know," he said, "that the king has sent orders to break up the sanitary watches and admit the vessels coming from Naples? Oh, we are lost! lost! lost! Poor city! Already this morning they have landed a large quantity of military uniforms, belonging to the soldiers who died with cholera in Naples, to be worn by those who are here!"

Mr. Grasso's words rang like a knell in my heart. After dinner I went to my room and found Serafina reclining on a sofa, as pale as death.

"What is the matter, dearest?" I asked. "Is it fear? Nonsense, my child."

"Nothing," she said with a trembling voice. "For you, only for you, I fear!"

"Now be a woman," I interrupted, "and listen to me. The cholera we must have, I am sure. The worst of it is, we might die. And now tell me, what is death? It is a happy passage to a blessed place where we shall go together to eternal bliss. But let us try to be courageous. If we face the danger with intrepidity it will retreat before us. The lion and the white bear do not attack the man who looks steadily at them, but only those who show fear. In these last two months I have read all the descriptions of cholera, and re-read purposely the narration of the plague at Milan, written by Manzoni, and by dint of thinking upon it, and of feeling as if I saw it, I have tried to familiarise my mind with those horrors; and I presume that I have succeeded in my aim, because I expect it without alarm. You do not know, my dear, how influential is imagination upon diseases of the stomach. The best medicine under these circumstances is cool courage and the avoidance of any fright or surprise. Now try, my dear, to acquire that coolness necessary in such solemn contingencies more than ever."



On the morning of the twenty-seventh of May, the news spread of two cases of cholera. They were two boatmen who had assisted in the landing of the military stores.

The alarm that this news caused was unbounded. Nothing but trains of carts and carriages were seen leaving the city. All those who could afford it abandoned the metropolis for airy abodes in the country.

At the dinner table an animated discussion arose between Doctor Grasso, the husband of the eldest sister of my wife, and myself. He proposed that all the family should go and live for the time in the city hospital which was to be hermetically locked up that very day; I suggested a country-seat.

The doctor spoke of the complete isolation of the place, of the daily fumigation, of the large store of provisions already collected, of the medical attendance, and every convenience in case of need. I maintained that a country-seat was isolated also, and that the free air and the rambling in gardens and on mountains was preferable to the pestilential miasm with which the atmosphere of the city must needs be impregnated.

The discussion was warmly sustained on both sides, but personal safety being concerned, the head of the family proposed a vote. He spoke the first and selected the hospital; all the family followed his choice. I said the country. Serafina, grasping my arm with a nervous excitement unusual to her said:

“With my husband for life and death.”

The parting was heart-rending. Bishop D. recommended me to have courage. I then went to my mother, and knelt before her, asking her blessing—perhaps the last—embraced my brothers and sister, and went on my way.

The next day we were settled in a beautiful country-seat upon a hill, with the company of the old nurse and her son, the valet.

Our country-seat was in a locality called *I Colli*—the hills. It is a tract of land of six miles in extent, interspersed with



hills, and entirely protected from the east winds by the lofty *Pelgrino*—pilgrim, a mountain that resembles Gibraltar.

In the midst of luxuriant vegetation are many stately mansions and palaces, surrounded by a great number of smaller country-seats, giving from a distance the view of a beautiful panorama.

On our arrival there we found the neighboring places already tenanted. At a short distance from our villa there was a mansion in which resided my friend Antonio, who had married a rich heiress. A council was held in the evening by all the neighbors at Antonio's mansion. Sanitary rules were laid down, watches were established all around to prevent the approach of any one, and a strict and rigorous refusal of any visitors was agreed upon. The communication of any sad news from the city was forbidden, and the least allusion to the cholera in our daily intercourse was strictly prohibited. Letters were left at the established frontier, brought by a waterman to Antonio's mansion, and thence distributed after the regular fumigations. In this manner we passed one month in comparative tranquility.

The disease was raging in Palermo, but the letters that I received every day assured us that the Grasso family and my mother's were all well.

One afternoon, on the first of July, I lay on the couch, as it was usual with me to take a nap after we had dined. On awakening I saw Serafina standing before me as pale as death, with a glass of ice lemonade in her hand, a beverage that I usually relished when I arose in the afternoon.

With a faint smile she said, "take your refreshment *anima mia*, my dear son." After I had drank it she placed the glass on a table, and then stroking my hair with both her hands, she looked at me earnestly and imprinted a kiss on my forehead.

"Dear Alfio, I would leave this place," she said demurely.

"Why? what is the matter?" I asked, "do you feel sick?"



"No," she answered, "but some one has already been attacked here."

"Well, this is nothing, dear. Be not alarmed. To go to the city is out of the question. People die there by thousands every day "

"My dear Alfio, fearing that the groaning and cries from the farm house near by, might awaken and alarm you, I have been standing here, this half hour."

"Is the farmer ill?" I asked

"Yes, and all his family," she answered, "but this is nothing. All the neighboring families are attacked."

"But how is it?" I asked; "two hours ago all were in good health."

"Yes," she replied; "but they were all attacked at the same time, just as if by a poisoned current of air. The baron J. died in five minutes."

"Please! ah, please, Alfio dear! take me this moment to the city, where if anything befalls you I may find all the necessary remedies!" Poor Serafina! She did not think of herself!

Immediately I sent for a cab and a cart, and two hours after we were on our way to the city.



## CHAPTER XL.

### A SAD PAGE.

WE could not rest the whole night. The dismal sound of the dead cart rolling on the pavement; the groans of the neighbors; the oaths and boisterous behavior of the conductors of the mournful vehicles, fell heavily on the heart. The ominous and unearthly cries, give us your *offal*, (a phrase adopted by those dregs of society instead of *dead*,) appalled even my



strong heart. Those voices were followed by a moaning hum, a thump, an oath, and the banging sound of the closing of two lids—and the terrible cart rolled its heavy wheels in the deep silence again. And all this was repeated every quarter of an hour.

I had to use all my energy to nerve myself and give courage to my angel wife.

“Let us pray for the dead,” she said with a holy fervor.

Both knelt and passed the night in prayer.

Towards dawn, fatigue overpowered mental suffering, and we were relieved for a few hours from our endurance, to reawake to more appalling sensations.

Towards noon I manifested to Serafina my longing to see my mother.

She glanced at me with an earnest uneasy look, then said :

“Go, my dear. It is a sacred duty. But, please, do not leave me long alone in these days of precarious existence !”

I did not recognise my native city. How it had changed in a month ! No more the place of mirth and song ! It was a vast cemetery. Houses and shops were all closed. It would have seemed an uninhabited city if, now and then, one had not met with some individual who, wan and haggard, strode by, holding up to his nose a phial of camphorated spirit, or disinfecting vinegar. This was either a priest, a doctor, or a distressed person who went in search of remedies for some dear relative.

The common priests on this occasion showed remarkable feelings of humanity and christianity. The city was abandoned to itself. The authorities, the nobility, and all the rich had fled to the country. The policemen had disappeared. The soldiers, confined to their barracks, were mostly useless for service.

The city was in the power of the rabble, who performed the functions, of dead carriers and grave diggers, to be afterwards superseded, in their turn, by other ruffians, who performed for



the former the same duties ; even criminals, were set free for that purpose.

On I went, through streets and lanes, but all wore the same melancholy aspect. All the houses were closed, excepting some which were entirely abandoned, because their inmates had been all swept off by the cholera.

Passing through those streets, which the usual throng and bustle of business made more lively and animated, I was more awfully impressed on seeing the same squalor of death—the silence of a burial place !

A little farther, and a boisterous confused noise attracted my attention. Turning a corner, a horrible spectacle presented itself to my dismayed vision.

A large cart was rolling slowly, pulled by two slim horses, unfit to carry the heavy weight of the conveyance. At its sides there were four beings who, with whips and sticks, belabored the worn-out beasts, accompanying the action with *Santo Diavolos*, alternating with the terrible chaunt: *give us your offal !*

Those wretched beings presented hideous visages, besmeared with dirt and sweat. Their matted hair hung partly on their neck and partly over their eyes. With bare arms, bare feet, and legs bare to the knees, and all soiled and tattooed. Their apparel was a combination of dirty rags, falling in shreds. The misery of their raiment was rendered disgusting, and their savage aspects hideous, by some pieces of finery with which they adorned themselves. A sure evidence of plunder.

One had donned a costly white silk embroidered vest ; another, a fine black dress coat ; another, a pair of patent leather pumps. The last one had a black satin cravat, and his fingers sparkled with rings. Arriving near the car I shrank to a closed door, but at the same moment a sorrowful voice was heard from a building near by, “ here is one dead.” A window of another house opened. A beautiful maiden with a face



indicating recent weeping uttered the word "here." An old crone as thin as a skeleton came out, saying, "there, villains, in that house there is a corpse. He is the last of the family," pointing with a skinny finger to a forlorn house whose doors and windows were all thrown open.

Three of the men started for the marked houses, whilst the fourth opened the lids of the car, exposing to the sight a motley accumulation of bodies.

Dreadful sight! Corpses of men and women, old and young: of maidens and babies; some half dressed, some naked, were thrown at random into that conveyance, forming altogether a group of limbs and hair horrible even to describe.

The three men came back carrying on their shoulders three bodies, and with obscene irreverence they tossed them into the car as if they had been dogs. Then closing the lids, they brushed the perspiration off their foreheads with the backs of their hands, drank by turns out of a bottle, and continued their clamorous round. The street once more became solitary and silent.

I hastened to my mother's house. How my heart palpitated when I raised the knocker of the door! My hand trembled, undecided before striking.

My brother Alberto came to the balcony to see who it was. "Open the door," I said. "Alfio," he said cheerfully, and went in. A few seconds elapsed, and he came to the aperture again.

"Mama," he said to me, "will not let you in!"

"Why? what is the matter?" I asked with great anxiety.

"It is all right," he replied, "we have all had the cholera, except Antoinetta, who has nursed all of us. We have recovered now, but we are so attenuated that we cannot stand. Mama cannot leave her bed yet. The only loss in the house was our servant who died yesterday, and we will not admit you here, for fear of your getting the disease. Are you all well?"



Here I related my returning from the country with all its incidents.

I saw also my sister, but my other two brothers I could not see because they were unable to walk.

"Dear Alfio," said my sister at length, "we are short of provisions, and, you see, none of us can go out."

"I will go," I replied, and started for the nearest market. Crossing one desolate street after another, whose rare passengers presented a woe stricken look; on turning into a narrow street I beheld a tumult. The street was so narrow that two carriages could not be driven abreast. This convenience is only found in the modern part of the city.

A dead cart was stopping in the centre, and a score of women were quarrelling with the cartmen. There was a poor man dead in his hovel, and, either through carelessness, or some other mishap, had been left there. The smell was horrible. The cartmen said that their cart was loaded to the top and they could not take him. An old ragged woman with her grey hair all dishevelled was levelling every sort of abusive words at the men. The female throng placed around the cart entirely obstructed the street.

I was obliged to stop behind the cart, waiting for the issue.

Finally, one of the men, with a tremendous *Santo Diavolo* entered the poor abode, and coming out with the naked corpse of an old man, said to his companions:

"Try to make room for this one."

The other three opened the lids, and taking hold of different points of the cart, began to shake it, causing the hands, feet, and heads of the dead to move and tremble horribly.

The strength they used was such that one of the two wheels came off its axle. The badly constructed cart overset, and—oh, horror! horror!—all the dead were thrown over me and I fell with them.

I am not able to relate my feelings at the horrible catastrophe.



What I can say is, that I was terror stricken, and at once I felt attacked with cramps—the first symptoms of cholera.

The instinct of self-preservation called imperiously on me to gather up my mental faculties. Making a strong effort against my stupor, I arose and ran. Bewildered, and not knowing what to do, I drew from my pocket a vial with camphorated spirit, and I swallowed its contents. Perceiving a church at a distance, I hastened to it, and sat under its portico.

At first, faintness overcame me. By degrees I felt better. But the excitement had been so overwhelming that I felt as if I had travelled twenty miles on foot. Drowsiness stole over me and I fell into a slumber. Then a noise awoke me, and on opening my eyes I saw a man bending, and a cart stood before the church.

My hair stood on end, and with a bound I started on my feet, asking the man, what he wanted.

The man, or I should rather say, the brute, answered only with a coarse and boisterous laugh, and went to his place.

At this moment I recollected that my mother needed my assistance, and that my angel wife must be anxious on my account. Nerving my energies I reached the market. Here another scene presented itself.

This place, so celebrated for joviality and songs, was now filled with distress.

Several persons had just been attacked and laid upon straw and green leaves in corners. A butcher had died in ten minutes, and there he lay stretched.

I hurried to make my purchases, and hired two men with large baskets. Whilst going out, men with litters came in to carry the sick to the hospital. The market people all raised clamorous voices to prevent their friends being carried away.

I conveyed the market purchases to my mother's house and started for home. Not to cross again the streets where I had witnessed so much misery, I changed my route. But, more



or less, the same horrors presented themselves. I walked abstractedly. Raising my eyes I saw the mansion of bishop D.

“ Oh !” I said, “ I will see if there is any body in the house to give me news of my good friend.”

Whilst I was raising the hammer to knock, the gate opened. What was my surprise on seeing the venerable man at the door. He was not dressed in his usual pompous episcopal habiliments, but as a common priest without the long robe.

“ Oh, what a pleasure !” I exclaimed. “ You here, my excellent friend ?”

“ Here is my place,” he answered, smiling.

“ But,” I continued, “ the archbishop, bishops, and all the hierarchy have left the city.”

“ Alfio, dear Alfio !” he said. “ Do you think it a time suited for sarcasms ? It is time to cover our head with ashes and go round to help the needy and the poor. Oh, my son, how grateful I am to the Almighty to have let me live to this time ! How many poor, forlorn people, dying in despair, I have seen in wretched holes that cannot be called houses ! How the holy word of consolation has arrived in time for me to see them breathe their last, happy, and with Christ in their hearts ! Oh, Alfio, wherever are the needy and the poor, there is my place. I have been out the whole morning ; I came in to take some food, and I shall return in the evening. This is my life.”

He said these words with a radiant face. He enquired if anything had befallen to my people ; then he raised his hand with composure and said : “ May the Almighty Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless you and yours,” and went his way.

“ Oh, holy man,” I exclaimed, “ thou art the true Apostle of Christ !”



## CHAPTER XLI.

### DEATH.

ON my arriving home my wife flung her arms round my neck, and sinking her head on my bosom she sobbed aloud.

“Why so long?” she groaned. “Oh, how you have frightened me! We have already the cholera in the house!”

“Who?” I asked breathlessly.

“The poor old nurse is violently attacked,” she replied.

“Well, dearest, be not alarmed. My mother and my brothers have all had the disease, and now they are out of danger.”

The following day the nurse died, and the valet was carried shortly afterwards to his mother’s resting place. Thus we remained quite alone.

Three days passed. It was night. A groan startled me from my sleep. Raising my head, I saw my wife standing. I could scarcely recognize her, she was so disfigured! Her eyes were sunken deeply in her head, a dark livid circle surrounding them; her cheeks hollow; her features contracted and livid; her nose sharpened.

“I have the cholera,” she said faintly.

I was terror-stricken; I could not utter a word for the moment. When I regained the faculty of utterance, “I will go for a doctor,” I said hurriedly.

“Oh, no! Do not leave me alone!” she exclaimed.

But knowing that the disease made rapid advances, I besought her to be calm, as I would soon return with assistance.



The physician of whom I went in search was a noble old man, who had been a friend of my father, and had retired from practice. On the occasion of the cholera he had devoted himself to the aid of his fellow men. He lived near us ; I had but two streets to cross.

I had not as yet beheld the city at night since its dreadful visitation. On emerging into the open air, what a sight presented itself ! The stillness of night was rendered awful by the red glare of flaming fires burning at every corner in earthen vessels. Those fires were nightly kindled, as they said, to purify the atmosphere. The fuel was a composition of pitch and drugs. This caused the air to become so thick that respiration could not be easily performed. I had taken but a few steps when a sense of suffocation came over me.

Arriving at the *quattro cantoni*, a cross where the two large thoroughfares meet in the centre, I felt like fainting. There is on one of the four corners the large and splendid church of St. Joseph, the portico of which is sustained by high massive marble pillars. There I sat between two capitals to recruit my strength.

Being certain that if found in a fainting state, I should be thrown into a dead-cart for a corpse, I hid myself so as not to be seen by the passers by. Several instances of this sort had already happened, and a few days before I had had a narrow escape.

I had been but a few minutes in that position when a dead-cart passed before me. If that sight was horrible by day, by night it was appalling. The red glare which shone on the faces of those men by the fumigating flames, added to the light of pitch torches which they carried in their hand, made them seem veritable fiends in search of human prey. A little while after, whilst preparing to continue my errand, my attention was arrested by the tramping of horses.

“ What might that be ? ” I mused. It was an extraordinary



thing in that epoch to see men on horseback, even through the day. The sound of the horses' hoofs neared, and I resolved to watch them pass from my hiding place. Two individuals approached, riding slowly. They were wrapped to their eyes in large cloaks, and conversing in a low voice.

Their being so muffled in such a sultry, hot atmosphere raised suspicions in my mind. But a short dialogue that I was able to overhear when they were just before the steps of the church was sufficient to reveal the mystery. It was as follows ;

“ How many to-day ? ”

“ Twelve hundred, sire.”

“ No more than that,”—*a chuckle*. “ Do not Sire me any more.”

“ Excuse me, but——”

I could hear no more, but the few words I heard, and the unmistakeable rasping guttural sound of voice, said plainly that it was the king. Nothing could have induced him, during his honeymoon, to visit Palermo in its sad catastrophe, and return on the same night, but the savage pleasure of witnessing the appalling tragedy.

I was frantic with anger, but this helped me to shake off my prostration, and I reached the house of the doctor. There the servant told me that he was at the nearest hospital.

All the spacious corridors of large convents were used for temporary hospitals. To one of them I directed my steps. On entering I found a hall covered with straw pallets tenanted by sick and dead. The aspect of the place was dismally striking. Cries, moans, groans on all sides, confused with voices of nurses and carriers loaded with the dead. The atmosphere impregnated with offensive odor and pestilential miasm was rendered suffocating by the disinfecting fumigations. There was a bustle occasioned by the confused going to and fro of priests and assistants.



New comers arrived at every moment, who had to see inanimate bodies pulled out of pallets which were to be occupied by themselves.

Such a spectacle filled my heart with dejection, but a dear object being paramount in my mind, I did not feel the impression that the place in itself was fitted to inspire. In the midst of so much confusion I asked a man, who seemed to be an assistant, where Dr. Polizzi was to be found. This man looked at me, and went his way without giving me an answer.

I perceived that I must go round and make my search unassisted.

Thus I hastened along several corridors, witnessing the same scenes at every step.

Finally, in a smaller room, I found the gentleman on whom centred my anxious thoughts. I related my case and begged him to go with me.

"I cannot leave for the present," he said; "but give her this medicine, and I shall be at your house at dawn, without fail."

Serafina grew worse, and when the doctor came, he declared the case hopeless.

To comprehend the state of my mind and how agonizing was my suffering, one must have watched, for once, by the bed of a beloved one in jeopardy. All the skill that love and tenderness can inspire, I employed in tending and nursing her. I had not a soul to help me. Two days and nights I stood before her, taking no other nourishment than some cordials, at intervals. The second day she was rigid and senseless. The third she opened her eyes and looked at me. How I rejoiced! I called her by all kind of sweet and endearing names.

"Dear husband," she slowly said, "I wish to have a priest."

I felt happy. Hope reanimated me, and I bounded to the balcony.



"How is she?" asked a lady from a balcony just in front of our house.

"Oh, she is better," I answered joyfully; "she recognizes me, and wants a priest."

The lady looked at me sadly.

Human nature! To bear the misfortune that like the sword of Democles hung over my head, I felt instinctively the necessity of indulging in false hopes. And I really hoped!

As chance would have it, a priest was passing by in great haste. I hailed him. The good man said he would soon return, and continued his way.

In a moment I was down stairs, in the street, pulling the priest by the arm, and accompanying the violence with every kind of entreaty. I would have made him a pope in that moment, if I had had the power of doing it, so anxious was I to fulfill her every wish!

"Time is precious," he said, "but God's will be done."

No more than three minutes he remained with Serafina to confess her and administer the Eucharist. In coming out of the room he pressed my hand saying: "she is an angel, sir."

On entering the room I saw her features a little reanimated, and her eyes beaming with heavenly delight.

"Do you feel better?" I asked eagerly.

"My Alfio—my God—" she ejaculated with ineffable sweetness. A slight quivering of the frame followed; her features became calm and serene; and her soul flew to the embrace of the Creator.

I fell on my knees crushed with grief. Although not unexpected, it was a blow that very nigh distracted me.

I did not sob; I did not groan! I was calm! Was it the calmness of resignation, or that of despair? I cannot answer the question, for I had no thoughts at that moment.

I can only say that I composed on the bed the precious remains; I kissed her brow, and placed on the floor two



lighted wax candles, in silver candlesticks; and knelt as a man who waits unconcernedly for his own end. How long I remained in that position I cannot tell. I was startled by a boisterous sound of voices.

Rising from my kneeling position and turning my head I saw at the door two of those ragged dead carriers.

"What do you want here?" said I, hissing with anger.

"No airs with us," said one of them in a ludicrous and comical-dramatic tone. "We execute the law. We want that *offal*."

"And," broke in the other, "a neighbor of yours told us the tale;" and both laughed.

The merriment of those brutal men, on such an awful occasion, appeared to me sacrilegious. I was distracted, and exclaimed with a shudder:

"Wretched men, leave in peace the sanctuary of death!"

They laughed wildly and long, and then said: "come—no nonsenses here—we are busy, my cove—that corpse belongs to us—we command here;" and thus saying they advanced a step into the room.

Transported out of myself with rage, I stepped to the wall where all manner of arms were arranged, as a trophy of arms. Snatching a broad sword, I flew at them. Handling two chairs, they remained at the entrance, swearing like demons.

At this moment the shrieks of two female voices recalled me to my reason.

There, at the door, behind those ruffians, I saw the wan and haggard face of my dear mother, with my sister, both extending their hands in a pleading manner. One of my brothers was there also. The sword fell from my hand, and pushing the two men back, I fell in their embrace.

By nature I am not given to weep, but at that time I wept! —I poured out a scalding flood of tears!

Those two men seemed moved, and in a subdued manner,



said to my brother, who had whispered something in their ears : “ We shall be at your commands, sir ;” and both went their way.

My mother knew my heart well. She knew that when contradicted, or imposed upon, I became a tiger, but by gentle manners I submitted meekly to any sacrifice. So she had the tact to draw me in another room, assuring me that all the arrangement should be made for a decent burial.

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## CHAPTER XLII.

### REMARKABLE EXCITEMENT OF THE PEOPLE, DURING THE CHOLERA.

It is consentaneous to human nature to accuse evil doers, for those miseries which befall unexpectedly, and in an unaccountable manner.

The cholera was in this category.

Men of science were at a loss to give it a proper designation. Some said it was epidemical ; others insised on its being contagious ; and both supported their views by unanswerable arguments.

The people decided for themselves. They saw the thousands in flourishing health, suddenly attacked and dying with all the symptoms of those who are poisoned ; and called it poison.

Who could spread death but a bitter and unconscientious enemy ? The king was generally believed to be the people's foe, and all took it for granted that the government poisoned the air, the water, in a word, everything. Their minds were so excited that this belief invaded even the highest classes and the best intellects.

The Abbot Scina—a man of renowned learning—at the point



of his death sent for the duke of Cumia—director of police and his intimate friend—and begged of him to give him the antidote for the cholera. The wife of the prince of Campofranco—Lieutenant General—when dying said to her husband : “ *Barbarous wretch, you murder even your wife to please your master!*” So excited was the mind of every one in the time of that dreadful scourge !

The city of Messina was the only one exempt from cholera. That people rose in mass ; cut off every communication ; even against the orders of the king, and remained safe.

In Catania the disease was of short duration. The people rose in arms, took the castle, imprisoned the authorities, and proclaimed the republic.

In Palermo there was not any movement with the exception of a hideous case originated by the blind conviction of being poisoned. In all the surrounding villages, the people in mistrust, sent away the authorities and the *gens d'armes* during the time that the cholera continued. It was an epoch which gave a good opportunity to the impartial and unprejudiced observer to see the different classes of the people in their proper light.

“ The nobility,” says an American writer,\* “ pampered by indulgence into habits of intense selfishness, too often entirely forgot the ties of parentage and the claims of natural affection ; children abandoning parents, and husbands wives, with the most remorseless indifference. But among that industrious class, in which the domestic virtues seem always to take the deepest root, and to flourish with the greatest luxuriance, there were numberless unknown and unrecorded instances of the noblest self devotion.”

The city of Syracuse was doomed to suffer the most in that calamitous epoch.

I was not there, but the facts were related to me by several

\* Tuckerman—The Cholera in Sicily.



gentlemen of that city, of high respectability. A coincidence which is worth while to narrate, placed me in the position of ascertaining their truthfulness.

I was at that time an intimate friend of the secretary of the Attorney General in Palermo; a respectable old gentleman full of humanity and patriotism, who is now no more. He was entrusted to carry to the post office the original inquest on the cholera in Syracuse, to be sent to the minister in Naples. But anxious to know events which made all true hearts beat fast; curiosity prevailed on the heart of the patriot above the duty of an employ  e: and he kept the papers in his possession for twenty four hours.

Chance would have it, that I went to pay him a visit that very evening. I found him in his library, sitting in an arm chair before a large table covered with papers. He was stout and ugly, but wore a very benevolent expression on his face. He had his elbows placed on the table supporting his large pock-pitted jaws. His bald head with a few grey locks hanging on his temples, was bending over a heap of filed papers marked with the large stamp-signet of the Criminal Court of Syracuse. Large spectacles encased in whalebone bestrided his nose, and his naturally bulging eyes were protruding, as if to devour the contents of the manuscript. At my greeting of "Good evening, Mr. Mastroni," he started, instinctively placed his hand on the papers, and looked at me with that expression of alarm which invades the face of one detected in a violation of duty.

For a few minutes he regarded me steadily, but with a kind of vacant look. Then as if a relieving thought had come to his help, his physiognomy brightened up; and as if thinking aloud, he said, "Pshaw! I have had with him weightier secrets than this, and he is the right stuff." Then with a tremulous voice, he said, "Come, Balzani, swear to me the strictest secrecy; and I will let you into it. I am old, you are young, and it is



right that this affair should be conveyed to futurity ; but it must remain buried in your bosom as long as I live ; and, beware, my very son knows nothing of it."

I assented, touching his hand, which action by honest men is deemed a stronger pledge than an oath.

The old gentleman felt relieved. He took from the table a round wooden snuff-box, six inches in diameter, opened it and offered me a pinch. Then holding the box open on his left palm he began, with his right fore finger, nervous with excitement, to stir the snuff into a little heap. This operation finished, he stretched even his thumb, took a large pinch of snuff out of its culminating part and inserted it into his nostrils. His brow contracted as if with a frown ; his eyes became sparkling ; his hands shook, and his nose performed a noise like the croaking of a frog, until the whole powder had reached its destination. This pinch of snuff sufficed to calm his mind, and his physiognomy became bright and cheerful.

Almost the whole night I remained with him, reading that inquest, of which every one spoke in those times, but no one knew what had become of it ; and the knowledge of my having read it would have cost me my life. The perusal of this important document, made me conversant with the true history of the affair, and so disregard all those amplifications that passion and public excitement always make in similar cases.

It is a good lesson in human nature to learn, how the mind of man becomes deranged on occasions of general suffering.

There, if the patience of the reader is not exhausted, he will find a summary of the events.

A man by the name of Guerra resided at that time in Syracuse, living by the exposition of cosmoramic views. His beautiful daughter was married to a hunchback Austrian, who lived with him. Guerra was generally known as the leader of a splendid equestrian company, who had become bankrupt ; the daughter was the acknowledged sylph of the company, but of



her husband, no one knew anything about his individuality. The cholera was making ravages in Palermo, when, one day, this beautiful woman said to a young nobleman, one of her friends, "Fly, fly, for pity's sake! fly from imminent danger! fly to your country-seat on the top of the mountain, and have its foot guarded day and night, so as to permit no one to ascend it! Twenty days after this, all precautions would be useless."

With the recklessness natural to youth, the nobleman answered, that what she said was nonsensical, as one place was just as liable as another to have the disease; and that he did not by any means, wish to abandon those he loved; "and you," he concluded, "are you not in danger just as much as any one else?"

"No," she replied, with a sorrowful smile; "there is not any danger for me. But if you feel any friendship for me, be secret, and manage so as not to be in the city twenty days after this."

In going out he met with two of his most intimate friends, a young baron and a lawyer. The first thing he did was to relate to them the lady's words. The two friends laughed merrily at the lady's apprehensions.

"Do you know what I intend to do?" said the youth; "if for nothing else, to please the inexorable beauty, I intend to obey her orders. Who knows! She uttered the last words with tearful eyes! Any way it is but a short time, and, forewarned forearmed—the proverb says."

Twenty days elapsed and the fatal news spread that the cholera had appeared in that ward of the city which was nearest to the sea shore. The two friends met and looked at each other in amazement. "Just at the appointed time," exclaimed the baron.

"Nonsense," answered the lawyer, "The best thing we can do, in these circumstances, is to avoid ennui. For this purpose



we will every night join a company of merry friends, and forget the cholera."

In five days the disease had already made havoc in the lower part of the city.

It was midnight. The two friends were gloomily crossing the attacked region to retire to their houses.

"Stop," said the baron to the lawyer, in a whisper. "Look at that man at the corner, bending down with a light in his hand."

The man after having lighted something on the pavement, moved rapidly away.

After a few seconds a bluish red flame arose on that spot.

"Hold on," said the lawyer; let us change our route! I do not like the color of that flame."

"We had better go after that man," said his companion.

"No, I do not wish to inhale the emanation of that flame."

They went home, promising to each other to observe the strictest secrecy about the adventure. Numerous cases of cholera were announced on the following day, in that street.

When night came, the two friends, at the same hour, went loitering in those sad, gloomy streets.

They walked, side by side, in silence, until they saw, at a distance, a man, whose uncertain manner of moving looked suspicious, they had not to wait long to see him strike a light, place it on the ground, and run.

They did not wait for the result of the operation, which was already known to them, but rushed after him.

After a short race, they saw him enter a door, in a by street, and close it behind him.

Raking some mud from the street, they marked the door with a cross, and then retreated to the house of the lawyer. Thence they took themselves to the house of the judge of the ward, presented a petition, signed by both, and asked a legal investigation of the fact.



It was scarcely dawn, when the magistrate, accompanied by the chancellor, officers, and the two witnesses, went to the marked house.

There he found two men, working in a laboratory, and a woman sleeping in another room. These were Guerra, his son-in-law, and his daughter.

A large number of alembics, crucibles, vessels, and vials were found, some scattered on the floor, others on shelves.

The interrogatory of the judge was answered as follows:

"We are chemists by profession. We distil and prepare medicines, and sell them to the apothecaries. The materials you see in those vessels are innocuous pharmacies, except if taken in large doses."

The lawyer insisted upon an experiment. Two chemists were sent for, who after being sworn began the examination.

The first vessel they took up was full of a white material in a very fine crystallization. One of them said he was not able to give his opinion till after the regular analysis.

The other chemist advanced his judgment that, by its look, the material might be either cream of tartar, or protochlorid of mercury. He felt so sure of his opinion that, in order to decide which it was of the two, he induced himself to place his forefinger on the medicine, and carry to his tongue the few atoms attached to it.

But, alas! How far from right was his statement! Scarcely had his tongue received the fatal touch, before his frame shook nervously, his face turned livid, his features contracted, his eyes sunk, and in a few minutes he fell a corpse.

The two prisoners wore the hue of death. All those present were horrified.

The contents of the other vessels were tried on dogs, and produced the same instantaneously fatal effect.

Guerra and his Austrian companion being interrogated by



the justice, to explain the names and the use of those extraordinary poisons, declined giving any answer.

A search was made in the house, where there was found a large sum of money, in gold doubloons, and several letters, partly in ciphers. One of them assigned the date at which the cholera broke out, as the day appointed to send some goods, and was signed *M. D. C.*.\* which letters, by the by, were deciphered by the prosecuting parties, as *Marquis Del Carretto*—the then actual Minister of Police in Naples.

A credential was also found in the Austrian's pocket-book, drawn by a banker in Naples, addressed to all the bankers of Europe, with an unlimited credit.

The prisoners being asked anew to give explanations about the poisons, and those papers, they obstinately declined.

The state of the woman was heart-rending. Terror stricken, she threw herself at the feet of the judge, and with tears and sobs pleaded innocence. In an earnest and submissive manner she accused the tyranny of that man who had been imposed upon her as a husband; and confessed that he used those poisons for the nightly fumigations

She also revealed that the hump on his back was a disguise, put on since they had arrived in Sicily. That he also wore a black wig—the natural color of his hair being light.

On examination it was found to be as she had stated.

With regard to her father, she said that he deserved more to be pitied than condemned; that he was but an accessory in the transaction; a thing that he could not possibly avoid, being entirely in the power of that cruel man.

The magistrate seeing that the proofs of the crime were so evident, ordered the three inmates of that house to be put under arrest, and committed them for a regular trial.

\* This particularity was related to me by eye witnesses, but in the original document that I perused, the signatures were blotted out with darker ink, in a manner to prevent the possibility of deciphering them.



The two gentlemen accusers insisted energetically, that it being an extraordinary case, in which the welfare and the lives of an entire population were involved, the trial should be continued forthwith.

The judge gave orders to remove the prisoners and the objects of proofs to the hall of the prisons, that the trial might be continued there, and sentence passed on the same day.

Fame—the ominous messenger—had at dawn already stretched her wings, and from roof flying to roof, and from the battlements of the tower to the peak of the steeple, had divulged, with wonderful rapidity, in the city and surrounding villages the awful and momentous news.

The discovery of this direful attempt filled with horror every bosom. Those who had already wept the loss of a relative or friend, were exasperated and furious.

Men and women, young and old, armed with guns, swords, knives, clubs, and stones, came out from every house, crying and shouting, justice, vengeance, and death against the malefactors.

Whilst this motley crowd was surrounding the prison calling out the criminals, an usher came to the window crying :

“Silence, the Criminal Court has met. The trial is proceeding.” These magic words were sufficient to change this turbulent mass of infuriated men into a body of calm spectators. All sat down and held their peace in attendance on the verdict. They mistrusted the judge, for they had formed an opinion that the ruler was at the bottom of the evil. Whilst this was passing on the outside of the prison, in the inside the two accused men pleaded guilty, but they kept firm in refusing to give any clue to the quality of the poisons, or to the persons who gave them the abominable commission. Towards dusk, when the multitude had commenced a murmur which sounded like the roaring of a distant tempest, the same usher announced that the prisoners had been found guilty, and capital sentence had



been passed on them. This was sufficient to appease the anger that burnt in every bosom, and all retired peaceably to their respective homes. On the fourth day after this event, masses of people gathered, forced the jail, took out the three prisoners and hung them to the lamp posts. They were used to see capital sentences in political affairs, executed three days after their delivery. Delay on this occasion inflamed their suspicions the more, and made them intractable. Thence they went in search after other victims. The Intendente of the Province by the name of *Vaccaro*, the Commissary and the Inspector of Police next fell, victims of the enraged throng. These three officers were men obnoxious to the people for their cruelties and abuse of their power.

Was it because the murderous cause ceased, or the state of excitement prevailed over the disease, that the cholera stopped its attacks after the day of this discovery ?

The city remained in a state of perfect tranquility and the other authorities were respected as before. In order to avoid the repetition of the introduction of new missionaries of murder—as they thought—the citizens had the gates closed and watches were set to guard them.

As soon as the news of Syracuse reached the young king Ferdinand II. his anger knew no bounds. The revolution of Catania with the proclamation of a republic had not so powerful an effect on his feelings as the behavior of the Syracusans.

He immediately invested the minister of police with his *Alter Ego*, and sent him to Syracuse with an army.

The Marquis Del Carretto is a man whose name history has associated with those of the most cruel monsters of inhumanity. He arrived in Syracuse with unlimited powers.

To his orders of opening the gates, the citizens, conscious of the rightfulness of their cause, answered, that far from being in a state of revolution they respected the sovereign authority ; but for public safety they would not permit the ingress of the troops.



This refusal caused two hundred bomb-shells to be thrown into the city. Towards morning the draw bridges were lowered, the gates were opened, and the army entered the bombarded city.

The first movement of the soldiers was to surround the cathedral and to take possession of all the vessels of poison, which, for safe keeping had been placed in a tomb under its floor. The day after this event the cholera reappeared in the city, mowing down thousands of harmless people. Alas! How awful was the destiny allotted to the country of Archimedes! The cholera was only a part! Syracuse saw a great many of her best citizens condemned and shot as rebels without any formal trial.

Tender youths—with ruthless barbarity—were butchered before the eyes of their parents, purposely bound to the spot, to be afterwards similarly executed one after the other, until the entire family was disposed of.

The tender sex was not exempt from their cruelty. A beautiful maiden was dragged to execution, for the only crime of having hailed from the window the frantic crowd on the day of discovery! It was the reign of terror.

As in the times of the French Convention, those who were imprisoned on suspicion were sure to be brought to the scaffold. The accursed hunger after gold was added to the other horrors of the time. The avarice of the commander and his officers did not disdain to bargain for human blood. Rich men imprisoned bought their lives with the payment of enormous sums. But the ruthless cruelty of the ruler did not stop here. He intended to give a mortal blow even to the political existence of that old and noble city.

Sicily is divided into seven *Valli* or States. Syracuse was the capital of one. The citizens looked on this dignity as the shadow of its ancient grandeur. Moreover, the residence of the tribunals and of the officers of the crown gave the city a kind of internal commerce; the foreign being entirely barred.



An act of the Dictator Del Carretto degraded Syracuse from the rank of *Capovalle*—Capital—of the State, and elevated in its stead the small city of Noto.

This was a new and ingenious torture inflicted on the heart of that noble and historic city, by placing it on the level of the meanest hamlet. In every other part of the island the word poison was high treason, and, when the cholera subsided, military courts were raised every where, which like wolves, in the night after a battle, were scenting after believers in poison, to immolate them on the altar of vengeance.

Having fulfilled his misson of wholesale massacre and desolation, the Marquis Del Carretto returned to Naples, and was honored in requital of his services with the red scarf of the high order of S. Gennaro. Sacrilegious decoration! But it was well adapted to the circumstances; for a blood colored bauble was well befitting services of blood.

“Del Carretto,” says the same American author,\* “passed rapidly from city to city, holding levees for the adherents of the crown, giving balls to the loyal ladies, confiscating the estates of the refugees, threatening death to all who should believe in poisoning as the cause of the pestilence, and shooting, after the merest mockery of a trial, all recognized ring-leaders of rebellion, and every one who could, under any pretence, be suspected of being a liberal.”

I conclude this painful chapter with an observation. The city of Catania, which on that occasion rebelled against the king, hoisting the colors of the Italian Republic, when restored to the old subjection, saw the butchery of several citizens, but was exempted from any degradation; whilst Syracuse, which, respecting the authority of the king, whilst in a state of natural exasperation, only punished two public malefactors, was made the target of Ferdinand II's wrath. Why was this?

\* Tuckerman.



## PART SECOND.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### AFTER THE WRECK.

By the end of the month of August, 1833, the lamentable scourge—the cholera—had quite subsided, and society began to move again, but like a wrecked vessel which needs all kinds of repairs, and a splicing of the broken cordage, before she can be fairly brought under command.

The aspect of the city was very interesting ; it inspired sympathy, veneration, and awe ; mourning was the general apparel. People were seen walking in all directions, with sad and discouraged countenances, staring at the buildings like the inhabitants of Pompeii revisiting their desolate homes. There was, indeed, at every spot, a painful remembrance.

Here was a woman with several children, whose deep mourning and wan faces, showed that they had lost the head of their family. There the sad, distressed countenance of an old gentleman bespoke the loss of children and grandchildren. Further on, a monk, whose sunken eyes and fallen cheeks, and whose staff scarcely enabled him to drag along his feeble steps, told the tale of his having been visited by the arch-destroyer, which had robbed him of all his rosy plumpness. A peasant with bent shoulders and attenuated form, came leaning with



his hand for support on the back of the mule he was leading into the city, loaded with greens to the market, showed that he had been a sufferer. Officers were seen walking slowly along, their uniforms hanging loosely about their limbs, their haughty demeanor and elasticity of step exchanged for a melancholy weariness, proclaiming that they also had been victims.

Friends, relatives, acquaintances, who met for the first time, shook hands in glad surprise, and kissed each other as if returning from a long and dangerous voyage, in which they had lost all hope of meeting each other any more. But no questions were asked, for fear of opening afresh wounds of recent date. The mourning garment told the tale.

Enmities were forgotten : it was a mute personal congratulation. Every one wondered how he had escaped in the general slaughter, and all strove to set themselves at work as if they would make sure that they were truly alive. Nearly one-third of the population had disappeared.

My mother's family had suffered no loss, but in that of my father-in-law, we lamented the death of Doctor Grasso, the husband of the eldest sister.

Tribunals, and the machinery of government was nominally put in motion, but one-third of the employés were no more. Stores and shops were opened, but the mourning stores only transacted business.

The first days I passed in going round to see my friends and acquaintances, and listen to their dolorous narrations. My six friends had suffered heavy losses, and Bishop D. had lost his housekeeper and the old footman and coachman. I found him calm as usual, and resigned to the will of God. Gregorio, the cook, had left him. Having lost all his family, he determined to turn hermit and spend the rest of his life in penitence ; therefore he had taken the place of an uncle of his, who had also died with the cholera, a hermit, who was the keeper of a cemetery.



What a change was observed at that time ! An immense number of children and women, deprived of their support, were reduced to beggary ; whilst some comparatively beggars, found themselves at once powerful and rich. Death, which had been the cause of so many miseries in the middle classes, cutting down fathers of families whose means of support depended on the employment by the government, stirred up the youth to strenuous exertion to obtain the employments thus vacated ; and consequently many young men, who, for want of means had been barred from social and political life, found themselves at once in a state of comparative ease.

In the course of one year there were more marriages than in the ten preceding, and the curates were at all hours busy in performing the ceremonies, and in six years the population was restored by births to its former number.

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## CHAPTER II.

### MY MOTHER.

AFTER the death of my wife, which weighed on my heart and spirits, I returned to my mother's family. My father-in-law and all his children, left no inducements untried to have me remain in their midst, but I could not inhabit their house. Every nook, every object was fraught with too many anguishing associations. Still there remained in my heart for them all a friendship and affection that the vicissitudes of many years have not been able to diminish.

My political position was at once advanced. Death had carried away many clerks of the chancellory, and I found myself elevated to the rank of first clerk, keeper of the archives of the Court, with a handsome income. This advancement, never dreamed for, instead of filling my heart with pleasure, made



me more miserable ; for it awoke my stupefied grief, and reminded me most sensibly of the treasure I had lost.

The love for my wife had made me ambitious, and all my thoughts had been concentrated in the exclusive idea of making her happy. Now I felt a void in my life, never experienced before. What did I care for honors and wealth, if she, whose enjoyment of them would have gladdened my life, was no more. Thus sorrow laid my heart in ruins, and I dragged through the days, in paroxysms of grief of such intensity that it bordered upon frenzy. The hours of retirement were terrible for me, as they naturally brought my mind back to the past ; to the time, though of very short duration, when I was a happy being, loving and beloved. Scenes of my late happy home, remembrances of my wife's affection for me, crowded into my mind. Words cannot give an adequate idea of the gloomy helplessness that I felt in those moments.

My friends tried to wean me from my melancholy, but all their kind attentions, far from having a soothing effect, irritated me, and made even the presence of those who bestowed them, irksome.

My mother and my sweet sister adopted an entirely different method. They never said a word to me, tending, even indirectly, to allay my grief, but their interest in, and their delicate and kind attentions to me were such as to distract my thoughts from my loss, by exciting kind and loving remembrances of them. To see their soul-speaking eyes rivetted sympathetically upon me, and their winning ways in caring for me, made me for the moment almost forgetful of my grief.

Considering that the hours of solitude are those which work most effectively on an ulcerated heart, my mother did not leave me alone in the evening. Till twelve or one o'clock she waited for me, sat down beside me whilst I supped, entertaining me with cheerful conversation. Even when I went to bed she did not retire until assured that I slept. The subjects of her con-



versation were always pleasant. When she had exhausted her store of news, she drew me on to speak of politics. Then her physiognomy took an aspect of eager interest. When I spoke of the *Giovine Italia*,\* her eyes sparkled, and she very often exclaimed :

“ I hope I shall live to see that glorious day when the blood of your sainted father shall be avenged !”

The month of September was drawing to its close, when one evening, to comply with earnest solicitations of a friend, I went to the opera. I had not visited that place since the month of May. On entering, the sight of the house made such an appalling impression on me that an acute pain seized on my heart as if an iron hand were crushing it. It was a little before the raising of the curtain. The place usually so enchanting to youth and the votaries of fashion, was seemingly transformed into a funereal display. Stillness had taken the place of that kind of pleasant humming usually caused by the subdued conversation and whispers of warm-hearted people, general melancholy had superceded the natural joviality, and instead of the various elegant and gay attires, a sombre black pervaded the boxes and parquette.

I gave a glance around, and with a choking sensation went out and turned my steps towards home. My heart throbbed thick and fast. I knelt at the foot of my bed : my brains seemed pressed by a heavy weight ; the drops of perspiration fell from my forehead, and sighs, more like distressing sobs, rose from my bosom, when an affectionate voice behind me uttered with acute distress the words, “ *Figlio mio !* My son !”

I started up and saw my mother standing erect, with an expression of sorrowful majesty.

“ Are you a man ? Are you a Christian,” she exclaimed, half angrily, half sorrowfully, with such tones of thrilling an-

\* A secret, political society, tending to overthrow the thrones, and unite all Italy in a single nation.



guish as not easily to be described ; “ or does your selfishness make you forget that you are both ? ”

“ Ah ! mother ! ” I ejaculated in a husky tone, “ pardon me ! I am an ungrateful son, I should try to be cheerful, were it only for your sake ; but here, ” —pointing to my heart—“ here, dearest of mothers, is something burning so vehemently, that I cannot help grieving.”

“ Let God’s will be done, my child,” replied my mother soothingly ; “ she is now a saint in better keeping than yours ; and instead of so long lamenting her loss, you should glorify God for taking her to himself. Who knows the ends of the Almighty in preserving you from the scourge ? We are as merchant’s clerks, travelling to do their master’s behests, until they are recalled to give an account of their mission.”

My mother’s words awoke in me my religious sentiments—dormant in the time of my all-absorbing sorrow,—and I determined to overcome my grief. With that firm and resolute tone of voice, whose value my mother had experienced enough to comprehend, I said, “ God’s will be done ! I shall try to conquer my nature.”

The following day I received a visit from my friend Onofrio Errante. He had lost his mother, and bore his loss with a calm manly resignation. After a brief conversation with my mother and sister on light topics he said that he intended to pass the month of October on a little tour to show some of our antiquities to a young French gentleman, whose father had been on friendly terms with his own when on a visit to Paris. He said that his chief object in calling was to invite me to accompany him.

My mother and sister with one accord turned an appealing and silent glance at me. I accepted the invitation, and we agreed to start in three days.

The following morning Onofrio introduced his new acquaintance, Monsieur de Tourville. He was a young man not above four and twenty years of age, with brown hair, small dark eyes



and florid complexion. His address was that of a thorough gentleman, united with it were the gayety of manner and joviality of temperament which characterize the French nation. After our introduction we all busied ourselves in making preparations for our trip.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### MORREALE.

It was the dawn of the second of October when, whilst completing my travelling toilet, I heard the jingling of bells, usually tied on the necks of horses in travelling vehicles, and the rolling of a heavy chaise on the pavement. A few seconds after it stopped at the gate of my house, and the cracking of a whip announced that it was time to start.

My mother, sister and brothers were already around me, and amongst kisses and blessings I took leave and went to the door. Onofrio and Mr. de Tourville were waiting for me. Women, boys, girls, children—some in their shirts, some naked in the arms of their mothers, came out in the street to God-speed me. I waved my hand to the people around, and jumped into the conveyance. The door was closed, the whip cracked, the horses started and we drove off amidst the cheering of the assembled crowd.

After the usual exchange of compliments, Mr. de Tourville asked me, in good Italian, what was the meaning of the excitement he had witnessed.

"I will with pleasure explain it to you," I answered—this cheering being one of the characteristic customs of our people.—"As you have undoubtedly remarked the style of our dwelling houses in this country is different from that of any other.



The front door and the gate give entrance to the stair-case, or the court-yard ; the dwelling part commencing on the second story, which we call the first. Except the palaces, which enclose exclusively the whole area, the lower parts of all other buildings are divided into small apartments of one or two rooms, where the poorer classes live. This class of people, the most of which are hard working mechanics, and but poorly paid, are generally burdened with a large family of small children, which they would find it impossible to support, were it not for the cheerful assistance given to them by their wives, some in sewing, knitting, or spinning, others in washing or ironing, or in vending small articles, such as oil, charcoal, needles, thread, hosiery, or fruit of various kinds. The work is mostly supplied by the families living in the upper parts of the houses ; some of whom also, in case of sickness or want, provide them with a doctor and medicine. These people are naturally grateful, a pleasant smile or a kind word addressed to them, or a caress or passing notice of their children are enough to raise their enthusiasm. They love, nay, almost worship my mother, and those belonging to her. The uniform kindness and interest she shows to all this class within her reach, accounts for the manifestation you have just witnessed."

After this explanation I remained silent, leaving to Onofrio the task of a pleasant, light conversation with our guest.

As we emerged into the open country, free from the atmosphere thick with speculations, and in some degree the prison of minds we had left behind ; I began to breathe freely.

The road from Palermo to Morreale, over which our chaise was leisurely passing, is four miles. The first three are straight, with a gentle ascent, and decked on either side with country seats and villas. The last mile, the road in mounting a steep acclivity takes a zig-zag course. On both sides the luxuriant vegetation proclaims the richness of the soil, and the hard toil of man.



The ground on the right is somewhat level, and is diversified with small meadows, fruit trees of every species, and lofty mountains, whilst on the left, there is a large ravine, which increases in depth in proportion as the road ascends. This is crowded with orange groves, and every other kind of fruit trees; leaving now and then to be seen at the bottom, through the interstices of the trees, a glimpse of the limpid flowing waters, a mill, a hut, or part of a peasant's cottage.

It was the first time, after my sad bereavement that the fragrance of orange blossoms and cassia, the pure balsamic air, reopened the eyes of my mind to the book of nature before me. A deep sigh—a sigh of relief—came from my bosom, and I glorified God, and thanked him for his bounty and mercy.

At this moment Onofrio broke the spell by addressing me thus :

“ Alfio, do you know the news ?”

“ What news ?” I asked, in an off-handed manner, a little disconcerted by the intrusion.

“ Why,” he answered, gaily, “ don't you know that Fabio has married ?”

“ No,” I returned, abruptly, shrugging my shoulders, “ I do not care to waste my thoughts on him. By the bye, who is the unhappy woman ?”

“ As for that,” replied he, in the same humor, “ it was an excellent match. She is an old spinster, the daughter of the financier O. She is a beauty! Tall, slim, bony, with sallow complexion, thin lips, aquiline nose, small, wicked eyes, bony jaws, receding forehead; and, to complete the portrait, she is one of those bigotted termagants, who go to confession every week. I wonder, what could have induced this man to marry such a *bijou* ?”

“ Money, and ambition,” replied I, laconically.

“ Not at all,” said he, quickly. “ They say that he loves her to distraction !”



Smiling, I looked at his eyes, but as one who is thinking of something else.

"What do you make out of it now?" he queried after a few seconds.

"I was thinking of human nature!" replied I, rather impressively. "Firstly, I deny that he loves her, because his life is a living lie. And if he does, I was just thinking of Pliny, who relates how an elephant fell madly in love with a perfumery woman, and that the eagle of Sestus was so much in love with the maiden who petted it, that after her death it threw itself upon the funeral pyre. In our case we only have to make a reversion—a man fallen in love with a beast-like woman."

By this time our chaise had slowly lumbered to the point of our destination.

The ancient city of Morreale is built on the right bank of a deep ravine, cut by the course of the once great river Oretus, now become a brook. The breadth of this ravine is so great that it might be called a large valley, if it were not for the flowing water at the bottom, and the steepness of its sides. The streets, except the main one, are crooked, very narrow, and with steep ascents or descents, suiting the hilly character of the place.

The entrance into the city for several yards from the gate is so narrow, that only one carriage can pass at a time; having a natural escarpment on the right and a row of blacksmith shops on the left, built at the very edge of the ravine. On entering this narrow place our chaise was surrounded by a swarm of ragged children of both sexes, clamorously begging for a *grano*—a coin worth the two hundred and fiftieth part of a dollar. Mr. de Tourville put his hand into his pocket. To prevent him I placed my hand on his arm saying, "Please, sir, do not give a single grano; because, if you do, we shall have a crowd of them around us, the whole day, which will be more annoying than locusts."



"But," said he, with animation, "if they are hungry?"

"Nothing of the kind," I answered, quickly. "I will show you those who really suffer with hunger, and do not beg."

"But why is this annoyance permitted?" asked he, with a puzzled air.

"For the same reason," I answered, with deep concern "that the roads are kept in bad order, or there is no road at all."

In a few minutes we were at an inn in the Piazza, and ordered breakfast.

Our meal over, we went out to show our guest the only two edifices worth seeing in that city, viz : the Cathedral, and the Benedictine convent.

In the midst of a large square rises magnificently and majestically, the cathedral of Morreale ; the more so from the contrast with the low and dilapidated buildings which surround it. This most splendid monument looks down from seven centuries, as a memento of Norman grandeur in Sicily.

As we approached the arched portico, Mr. de Tourville, looking at the doors, remained astonished. They are high and wide, opening in the centre, and made of bronze, divided into many squares, *each being a bas-relief*, representing subjects from the old and new testament.

"How grand !" exclaimed our guest.

"This door," I explained, "was cast by Bonanno, of Pisa, in the year 1186."

"What drawing !" he continued, "what truthfulness in the personages ! What perfection of modelling !"

The inside of the church has the form of a Latin cross, three hundred feet long and one hundred and twenty-four wide. The arches in acute angles are supported by colossal and polished oriental granite columns.

The countenance of Mr. de Tourville announced satisfaction and astonishment, as we went around observing the walls of



the naves, the apsis and arches, covered with fine old mosaic, representing passages of the scriptures, adorned with every kind of precious marbles. The main altar, entirely of carved silver, surrounded with statues by Marabitti, completed his astonishment.

On returning to the door, he receded one step, exclaiming to himself—*C' est dommage ! C' est dommage !*”

“What is the matter ?” asked Onofrio.

“It is a great pity,” he answered, with a mixture of sorrow and contempt on his countenance, “that in a temple so grand, and superb, and for which money was not spared, that order is wanting.”

“Please, explain yourself ?” said I, in a puzzled tone.

“Why !” he continued, in the same tone, “look at those capitols ; they are of two different styles, although of excellent workmanship. What a pity !”

Onofrio and I exchanged a momentary glance, which meant—poor fellow !—then I answered, with the most polite calmness I could assume : “Dear sir, this very difference of style forms the grandeur of this temple, and of all other temples alike ; because it traces the epochs of ancient greatness and barbarity. In all epochs the brutality of vengeance has led the infuriated mob to destroy the buildings and monuments erected by the expelled conquerors. The Normans collected the pillars of the ruins of several centuries, and adding something of their own, built churches and palaces, which still remain in our time. In fact, this was built by William II., called, *il Buono*—the good.”

Thence we passed to visit the convent of the Benedictines. Bishop D. had given me a letter of introduction to Father Bentivegna, of that convent, saying : “He is a learned, good, liberal and honest man, though a monk. Yes, my boy, there is many a monk having those qualities, and only known by Law.”



This convent is contiguous to the cathedral. It is surrounded by a portico supported by two hundred columns. At an angle of the cloister is seen a fountain surrounded by arches and columns in the Moorish style.

Father Bentivegna received us with the utmost amiability, and, after having shown us the library, the pictures, and the treasury, consisting of gold and silver utensils, studded with stones of immense value, he invited us to dinner.

After dinner we went to see something of the city, but this inspection was very disheartening. Now and then, men wan and haggard, with sharp features and protruding eyes, presented themselves to our sight, walking like shadows, and darting at us glances indicative of envy and hunger.

"Look at that man," said I to my companions, earnestly "he is starving."

Mr. de Tourville thrust his hand into his pocket again, but I stopped him asking, "have you your card-case?"

He answered affirmatively, and handed it to me. I approached the peasant, for such he was, and said to him: "good man, would you have the kindness to call to-morrow morning at Father Bentivegna's?"

Staring at me, he answered, "yes, excellenza."

"Then present him this card, and he will tell you something."

We repeated the same scene a dozen times on our way back to the convent, where we lodged for the night.

After supper I asked four dollars from Onofrio, and four from our guest, and giving twelve dollars to our host I begged of him to give one to each person that should bring a card.



## CHAPTER IV.

### SEGESTA.

THE dawn of day was plainly announced in the east, and the stars were fading in the sky, on the following morning when our party were already jolting over the hill-side road, in a chaise. Oh ! beautiful country !

At this hour the heart awakes at the same time with nature, and thoughts of gratitude and reverence arise towards the Creator ! Our way was irregular ; tortuous, or straight, with steep ascent or descent, according to the necessities of the mountainous locality, in which it was laid. The discomfort caused by the badly-kept road, was repaid by the enchanting scenery, which varied at every turn.

Here was a narrow glen, with broken masses of rock on both sides, spotted with short, green turf, and filled with wild flowers and sumach springing from all the interstices of the rocks ; intermingled with them the sweet scented yellow blossoms of the broom perfumed the air. Then we would ascend a lofty ridge, exposing to the sight, broad fertile meadows, dotted with cattle ; hills covered with trees ; and rocks of purple hue, where goats were climbing, vineyards, olive orchards and silvery brooks, with serpentine windings ; peasant huts and distant hamlets ; and beyond all, the far-off sea, dotted with sails, looking like small white birds. The smell of the sweet thyme, crushed beneath the horses' hoofs, the scent of other wild flowers ; the soft sighs of the wind ; the balmy air ; the bellowing of the cattle ; the bleating of the sheep ; the sweet



warbling of the birds, and the soft melancholy notes of a reed-flute, played at a distance by a shepherd, sitting on a rock, contributed to heighten our enjoyment of the beautiful and grand scenes spread before us. Swaying, swinging, jumping, now on level ground, brushing the boughs in the hedge-rows, and anon over a hillock, or through a ravine, our conveyance rolled. There were clusters of chestnut trees, whose lofty stature, and picturesque shagginess of barks told their antiquity. There, rows of cactus or Indian fig, loaded with their luscious fruit, fenced orchards of plums, figs, apples, pears, pistachio nut, and almond trees ; the most of them bearing fruit. Yonder were large fields, with scattered olive trees on a yellow stubble ground, which betokened that the wheat had been mowed there. Yonder, near a brook, a cottage was seen, within an enclosure of several acres, hedged with aloes, well stocked with every kind of fruit trees.

And so on, in succession, through all our journey, such pictures were unrolled. We passed through Borghetto and Partenico, two rural towns in which there is nothing particular worthy of note.

Towards noon we arrived at the city of Alcamo, where we were to take our dinner. This town, situated at the foot of Mount Bonifazio, has a population of nearly 18,000 inhabitants. It was built by Frederick II., but there is nothing remarkable in it. In approaching it are seen at the top of the mountain the ruins of a fort, and the walls of the old city ; built by the Saracens, and then abandoned for a better site.

Fortunately for us, father Bentivegna had provided us with plenty of cold chickens and other luxuries, so that we were not under the necessity of partaking of the cheer of our inn-keeper. Whilst we were giving some orders and appeasing our thirst with a glass of wine and water, four gentlemen introduced themselves, each inviting us, with kind manners, to go to rest at his house. We, of course, declined, with the same courtesy.



One of them said with a bow, "It would amuse you, gentlemen, to go with us to see the city, whilst Fabbrijo—the host—is cooking your macaroni."

We found nothing remarkable except a beautiful picture by the Morrealese in the cathedral. Still we were not illiberal of praises at every thing pointed out. What pleased Mr. de Tourville was the inspection of the marble quarries in the neighborhood, and the beautiful and fine specimens of yellow marble presented to us.

On our return to the inn, we found the table prepared for dinner, and loaded with every kind of fruit, and several bottles of wine—a present from our new acquaintances. A smoking dish of *macaroni* was brought in, rendered doubly inviting by the keen appetite. The four gentlemen declined partaking, having dined before joining us. Still they remained keeping us company with a cup of coffee. They belonged to the best families of the town. At the end, giving them our cards, with many thanks and invitations to pass a few days in Palermo, we resumed our journey.

Scarcely were we out of town before Mr. de Tourville turning to Onofrio asked, "Who were those four gentlemen?"

On Onofrio's answer expressing ignorance, he turned to me with an inquiring look. When I told him that it was the first time I had had the pleasure of seeing them, he muttered "*C'est droll.*"

"By and by, you will make yourself acquainted with the character of our people," interposed Onofrio, slowly; "they seldom see a traveller here, and when it happens that they do, they give vent to their naturally hospitable feelings."

"Oh! Pardon!" exclaimed the French gentleman, looking at us abashed, and placing his hand on his forehead. "Pardon; I am a sot, or I should have known as much."

At dusk we reached Calatafimi, a small town of Saracen origin, where we were doomed to pass a bad night on account of the beds, and their regular occupants.



For half-an-hour had the morning of the following day seen us riding on the back of mules, when, like an apparition, there presented itself to our gaze the temple of Segesta, lonely and prominent, upon the top of a high hill ; and it as suddenly disappeared, our vision being obstructed by an embankment, which through the tortuosity of our path, hid it from our view.

A quarter of an hour more, and we were in full prospect of the only monument remaining of the old city of Segesta or Ægesta, standing in majestic simplicity, a witness of Trojan\* grandeur thirty centuries ago, and of the vicissitudes of ages. There was not a single tree, or other object to distract the attention of the beholder, from the monument. It occupies a small elevation scattered with ruins, overgrown with grass and weeds, where goats were climbing, choosing the daintiest food.

The whole scene inspired veneration and awe. Decay and rust of centuries had settled on the monument, and its loneliness was suggestive of desolation and death.

This temple, built of calcareous stone, is two hundred feet in length, seventy in breadth, and sixty in height, without roof. Its form is a parallelogram. Thirty-six columns formed of several blocks each six feet in diameter, supporting an ornamented frieze, stood on four large steps. The whole was blistered and blackened, by the sun, rain, and dust of centuries.

Descending the hill of the temple we loitered in the valley, where the city once stood, stumbling sometimes over a broken pillar, or some other fragment, till we reached the opposite hill called *Varvaro*, where we observed the theatre, of which there remains the foundation of the outer walls and the lower seats, rising in semi-oval steps ; the inner area being full of broken pillars, capitals, cornices, and rubbish overgrown with weeds. Then we walked to the south-west, where on an elevation which commands a beautiful view of various villages and the bay of

\* Diodorus and Thucydides recognize this city as of Trojan origin, built by Ægestus, one of the leaders under Æneas.



Castellamare, we saw the ruins of a fortress. There we stopped and ordering our *mulattiere* to lay on a flat stone our provisions we sat down to rest, and to satisfy the cravings of appetite.

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## CHAPTER V.

### PIANA.

My friend Onofrio had, previous to our departure from Palermo, made an engagement with Antonio to meet at *Piana dei Greci*, to go to a neighboring wood for a grand boar hunt. Therefore, instead of continuing our tour in quest of monuments of antiquity, we went back to Palermo and thence took the road for Piana.

There are in the interior of Sicily four towns of Greek origin, which still maintain their primitive language, customs, fashions, and manners. Their origin goes back to the middle of the twelfth century. The Greek Emperor, having declared war against Ruggiero, King of Sicily, a Sicilian fleet went to Constantinople, attacked it, doing considerable damage, particularly to the imperial palace and gardens, discomfited the Greek navy in the Black Sea, took the Island of Corfu, sacked Corinto, Thebes, Athens, and other cities, laid waste Cefalonia and Negroponte, and returned loaded with rich booty and several thousand Greek prisoners, of both sexes.

These people were divided into four colonies, and sent to inhabit different places in the interior. They were industrious, and many of them skilful in the art of weaving silk stuffs embroidered with gold and silver. Their colonies soon became thriving towns, and thus they still remain, each preserving its individual character in the old Greek spirit.

The town of Piana (one of those) is sixteen miles west from



Palermo. It is situated on the upper slope of a deep valley, through which a river flows. Like other rural towns, it has narrow, crooked streets, small, low houses, and a comparatively large square, where are situated the cathedral, the inn, the town-hall, and the two or three story houses belonging to the aristocracy of the place.

It was early on a beautiful Sunday morning that our chaise rolled into the *piazza* of *Piana dei Greci*. The bells of the cathedral were chiming a merry tune, and a bustle of persons going and coming was observed, as of people excited by something extraordinary.

We alighted at the inn, a dismal, dirty looking place. The arrival of a chaise with well-dressed travellers not being an ordinary occurrence, attracted the attention of the people, and occupied the inquisitive in speculations as to who were the strangers and what business had brought them there. The mayor, the judge, and other dignitaries, sitting at the apothecary shop, as was their wont, were more than others puzzling their heads about the position of the new arrivals, and the propriety of extending to them their hospitality.

But all their doubts and speculations were soon resolved by a piece of pasteboard. Onofrio sent his card to the bishop, and a few minutes after, a well-dressed young man about twenty years of age, with a strongly marked physiognomy, presented himself at the inn, introducing himself as the son of Bishop L. In a very polite manner he invited us in his father's name to make his house our home for the time we remained in the place.

Bishop L. was about seventy years old, tall, muscular, and with a noble bearing. His hair was perfectly white, falling in curls to the shoulders, his moustaches and beard of the same hue, and the latter fell profusely on his chest. He had a Greek profile, red face, large brow, and soft grey eyes. On the whole, far from showing the grim visage of an aged priest,



his countenance was good and benevolent, and betokened that his life had been a happy one.

He had six children, three sons and three daughters, all well trained and educated. His wife, a handsome, portly matron, had a bearing which showed that the sceptre of her household was exclusively in her own hands.

"You came just in time," said the bishop to Onofrio, good-humoredly, after the latter had introduced his two friends; "we have a wedding to-day. Mr. Selimo, one of our richest proprietors, is to marry the daughter of the mayor, and all the town is in a stir. In the meantime, do you make yourselves at home here till the hour of eleven, when we go to church,"

"What kind of a man is Bishop L.?" I asked Onofrio, when the bishop had retired.

"An excellent one," he replied with eagerness, "open, good-hearted, and liberal."

Breakfast was served, and the three sons of the bishop did not omit any care to make us comfortable; continually praying to be excused that in a rural town we could not find all the accommodations and delicacies of city life. But for the sake of truth it must be said that we could not pass a day more comfortably than we did there.

We were very anxious to see the daughters. From what we had observed of the fair sex in the Piazza, the women of the place were all more or less handsome, though tending to plumpness; and giving free course to our youthful imaginations, we had depicted those young ladies as models of beauty. But during our breakfast their places at table remained unoccupied.

It was eleven o'clock when we had finished our *recherche* toilet and accompanied the bishop and his sons to the church.—The ladies had gone before.

A beautiful sight presented itself to our view in that sacred place. It was already crowded with people, who, for the dou-



ble reason of its being Sunday and a wedding-day, had donned their best attire.

The nave was divided into two enclosures, each having rows of benches and leaving a space in the middle from the entrance to the choir. On the right side sat the women, and the men on the left. The female apparel of all classes was uniform in shape and color, with a slight variety in the quality of the fabric. They wore a skirt of red woolen stuff reaching to the ankles, a black or blue bodice trimmed with red ribbons was fastened to the waist and laced with red silk cord over a chemisette of linen which remained open to the neck, displaying part of the neck and shoulders. Their black, glossy hair was combed back off the forehead *à la Chinois* and braided; it was then tied with a broad ribbon—red in the case of the young girls, and black in that of the matrons—and fastened with a gold or silver crescent, the sharp ends of which were stuck into the hair. On the promenade or at church they wore a white flannel circular on their heads, which hung in graceful folds to the waist. It was a remarkable and pitiable fact that most of the women of thirty-five and upwards were bald on the top of the head.

The men wore fine linen shirts, with short collars and full sleeves, and some were richly embroidered, and fastened in front and at the wrists with gold pendant buttons. Their jackets were of velvet, trimmed with two rows of gold buttons, and were without sleeves and collar. They had short breeches of blue velvet, fastened at the knees with small gold or silver buckles, white stockings, and pumps with large buckles of gold or silver according to the rank or means of the wearer.

We being guests, were ushered into the choir where we took seats whilst the bishop went to the vestry room to dress himself for high mass. Ten minutes were of a very short duration for us who had so much to observe.

The bride was a girl of about eighteen years of age, of me-



dium height, with a fullness of form which gives symmetry and gracefulness to the figure. Her face was slightly oval, her cheeks dimpled and rosy, her complexion clear, her nose Grecian, her lips small though full and ruddy, her large eyes shaded by rich black lashes. Her glossy black hair was braided and carried around to the back of the head, where it was held firm by a gold circlet studded with diamonds. Strings of pearls were twined amongst the braids, the ends of which were tied with a bow of broad white ribbon that hung below the waist. Large circlets, clustered with diamonds, hung from her ears.

Her neck and arms were adorned with pearls. The skirt of her dress was of rich white satin, the bodice was of scarlet velvet worn with a velvet stomacher studded with diamonds, emeralds, and rubies. A veil of white lace, covering the whole, completed this rich and beautiful attire.

The groom was dressed in the national costume just described, the cloth being of the finest quality and the buttons and buckles enriched with diamonds.

The bride entered the church, having two bride's maids at her sides, also richly dressed, holding the two ends of her ample veil, and accompanied by her parents and relatives. As they reached the railings of the main altar, she knelt on the left, and all her followers took seats in the choir on the same side. Next came the groom who knelt at her right, and on his side entered and took seats his parents and relations. The bridal pair were each provided with a lighted wax taper. Directly the bishop came out in his rich pontifical apparel, followed by his acolytes, and the high mass began.

Although the ritual was the same as that of the Latin church the ceremonies were so different that I felt as if I were present at the performance of some Oriental rites.

The habiliments of the bishop and of the four priests, were entirely different from those I had before seen used for the same functions. They were more complicated and rich.



Four fans, in the Chinese form, were standing on two tables. They were circular, made of white silk embroidered with colored flowers and having long handles. Two of them were two feet and a half in diameter, and the other two, one and a half. Every five minutes—I cannot tell on what occasions—the four priests took these fans with both hands, and slowly fanned the bishop three or four times.

The Latin priest makes the sign of the cross by raising his right hand and marking with it in the air; with his face turned toward the congregation and only once during the mass. But in the Greek mass the priest raises both hands, closes the second and third fingers, and crosses his arms upwards and downwards, so as to make the sign of the Greek cross. And this performance was gone through with by bishop L. many times, either turning to the public, or along the front or at the sides of the altar. Besides, he made at various times other quick and animated gestures.

If a Greek Roman Catholic should read this volume and be shocked at some minute inaccuracies in the account of the ceremonial above described, I protest that I did not comprehend in the least those maneuverings, and now I am writing of them as best I can from memory.

Although I had my own ideas about the Christian religion, this mass being performed so differently from that I was accustomed to witness, far from producing on my mind the impression of a mass, conveyed—may God pardon me—the idea of a juggler's performance, and aroused my mirth.

Turning to my friends I beheld Mr. de Tourville sitting stiffly with a long face, like a man exerting all his power of muscles. Onofrio's countenance was convulsed, and announced an imminent explosion of laughter.

"Be sober, by all that is dear to you!" I hissed, into his ear.

"I can't help it," ejaculated he, in a husky tone, putting his handkerchief hurriedly to his mouth.



I perceived at once the dreadful predicament in which we were. We were all convulsed with the strong efforts to refrain our laughters. If one of us gave way the others could not help following the example. The consequences attendant upon such behavior, would have been—besides the rudeness—to make ourselves liable to be mobbed, at least. As an extreme resort, I hissed in the ear of Onofrio :

“You are not a gentleman, you are a knave, a ruffian.” My reflections and my words were the affair of three seconds. Onofrio, forgetting his laugh, darted at me a fierce glance, to which I answered with an assumed frown.

Thus we remained quiet till the end of the high mass.



## CHAPTER VI

### A GREEK WEDDING.

DURING the whole ceremony of the mass, the betrothed remained kneeling by the railing on the outside of the altar, each holding a torch which rested on the floor. When the mass was finished, a small pillar, with a marble basin on the top, in which there was some alcohol burning, was placed on the platform, and the wedding began.

This ceremony was very imposing. The bishop was standing with his back against the altar, enveloped in the gorgeous ceremonial habiliments of the church, and with his head covered with a jewelled mitre. This, together with the species of sacrificial fire, burning before him, gave to his venerable aspect such a solemnity, as to convey to my mind the impression of the old Simeon, described in the Scripture.

The four priests were also apparelled in gold-embroidered garments with Greek caps on their heads, and stood, two on each



side of the bishop, one below the other, on the steps of the altar. All the relatives and friends, standing, forming a circle around the choir.

The two fathers advanced, presenting the betrothed at the foot of the altar; the organ discontinued its music, and the sacrifice commenced.

The bishop addressed the couple before him, in the Greek language, for twenty minutes. All this time the eyes of the groom were beaming with joy, whilst the bride stood motionless with down-cast eyes. But for the frequent heaving of her bosom, one would have thought her dead; so pale was her face. When the solemn question was asked, she darted at him a soul-speaking glance, full of sweetness and love, a crimson flush covered her face and neck; the solemn "yes," scarcely audible, was uttered, when a paleness succeeded the former glow upon her cheeks. The two bride's maids immediately advanced to her, fearing her emotions would overcome her, and whispered into her ears.

Mr. de Tourville, who up to this time had been eagerly attentive, said to me, in French: "Oh! power of love! That girl is suffocating under the inward emotions of love! Oh, she will make this man happy for his life-time."

The solemn vow being performed, the bishop blessed the ring and handed it to the groom who placed it on the bride's finger. In the meantime the bishop crossed his arms over their heads, uttering a short prayer. He then took from the altar two wreaths of flowers, and placed one on each of their heads. After another short prayer, taking again the two wreaths, one in each hand, he exchanged them on their heads, by crossing his arms. He then took from the altar a small biscuit, soaked it in a glass of water, handed half to the bride and half to the groom, uttered a prayer, holding the glass with both hands. Scarcely had they swallowed the biscuit, before the bishop let the glass fall into the marble basin. The glass was shattered



into fragments, the flame extinguished, and a buzz of blessings echoed from the multitude. In the choir, there was a confusion also; friends and relatives vieing with each other in shaking hands with the groom, and in kissing the bride, whilst the bishop and priests retired into the vestry room to take off the sacred apparel.

After a few minutes the bishop came out and introduced us to the groom, who graciously invited us to accompany him to his house. Then we went out in procession, whilst a band played opera tunes on the portico of the church. All this time Onofrio had kept surly and silent, avoiding my looks with a frown on his brow.

On our way to the wedding party I contrived dexterously to remain behind with my friends. When out of hearing of all others, I stopped and faced Onofrio, looking at him steadily, and with a smirk in my eyes, which meant—well, my boy, if it were not for my trick, you would have cut a beautiful figure in the church. He first looked at me sternly, but as by degrees he read the meaning of the language of my eyes, his physiognomy gradually changed, until we both burst into shouts of laughter, and shook hands cordially.

Monsieur de Tourville, who from the beginning perceived that something unpleasant was imminent for some cause unknown to him, was now at loss to conjecture the meaning of our present merriment. This could be read in the astonishment of his look and in the eagerness of his glances. But as he was a gentleman, he did not ask any question, and was none the wiser.

All the relatives and intimate friends of both parties, the bishop, the priests, and their wives and grown up children had gathered in the house of the groom. A sumptuous table had been prepared in the large parlor for this occasion. A band played continually in an adjoining room.

I will not tire my reader with the description of the banquet.



I will only say that it was a period of torment for the sensitive bride, who ate nothing, and passed the whole day in blushing at every word, at every remark, at every toast. In the evening there was a grand ball, and at twelve o'clock we returned to the house of our host.

The next morning Antonio arrived, but the bishop would have us remain there for another day, extending even to Antonio his hospitality. There was to be the christening of the first born of a rich proprietor, who profiting by the presence of the music band, cooks, and confectionery men who had come from the capitol on the occasion of the wedding, would solemnize it on that evening.

The second breakfast passed, and we had not yet seen the young ladies. Mr. de Tourville deprecated the keeping the young ladies entirely shut out from society, on which Onofrio explained that this was the custom in all small towns, to make an exception was deemed the highest favor and mark of confidence one might bestow on strangers.

At dinner time, to our great surprise, we found the three daughters at table. The bishop introduced us to them, with eyes beaming with love, and giving them all kinds of endearing names. And they were beautiful indeed! They were the three graces in the full meaning of the word.

We made a few complimentary remarks, and they bowed, suffused with blushes. Seeing that every attempt at light conversation brought with the answer a deep blush, we abstained from new endeavors.

The expression of that venerable man at table was full of joy. He looked all the time from one to another of his children, with such transport as if he would have infused his soul in them. At the sight of such complete happiness a thought flashed through my mind, and I fell into a reverie. As the meal drew to its close, a light conversation began; I was



startled from my meditations by hearing my name pronounced by the bishop, who said :

“ Well, Mr. Balzani, you are as collected in thought as if you were revolving in your mind the solution of some mathematical problem.”

This address, although made in the gayest humor, disconcerted me, for it reminded me of the impropriety of withdrawing from the general conversation.

“ You will pardon me, Monsignore, my rudeness,” I answered, “ when you know that you and your good family were the subject of the problem.”

All eyes were turned on me. The matron's with complacency, the young ladies' with a blush, and the young men's with surprise. The bishop looked round at his children with paternal satisfaction, and then said with a chuckle :

“ And you have not yet found the solution ?”

“ No, Monsignore.”

“ Let us hear it then,” continued the bishop, in the same humor, “ perhaps we may help you.”

“ I am afraid,” I replied, “ that the problem being a religious one, I am not strong enough to compete with you in the controversy that may issue.”

“ Mr. Balzani,” interposed the lady with blended dignity and humor, “ now you have said too much to recede ; our curiosity is aroused, and I would by no means let it rest.”

“ I obey you, madam,” I replied with a bow, “ and will proceed, although I am sure to have the worst of it.

“ The happiness in which it appears that the soul of Monsignore is bathed in the midst of his family was the cause of my reflections. You were happy, Monsignore, when you took to the altar the companion of your life. You were happy when your offspring first saw the light, in accordance with that human feeling which all prove, but few understand, viz.: of perpetuating oneself in his children. You were happy in your



toils and cares of training and educating them, reaping the reward in the satisfaction of having served God and society. You are doubly happy now in seeing them, one a doctor of law, who, in the course of time, will become an upright magistrate ; another, a doctor of medicine, who will regard his profession as a ministry, to which the poorest have the highest right ; another, a clergyman, who, following your example, and with a heart fostered by like influences as well as your own, will gather the orphans to his bosom, minister heartfelt consolations to the widow, drop a tear for the distressed—that tear of sympathy which to a sorrowful heart is more refreshing than the dew which falls on withering plants. You are happy in seeing around you these tenderly cultivated lilies, a comfort and glory to your age. Finally you are happy in having the pleasure of proclaiming as yours, before God and man, an affectionate and exemplary wife, and good and dutiful children, blessed by the Church and honored by society.

“ Now let us turn the page. Behold that man, walking with uncertain steps, as if some one were pursuing him ; his countenance is sad, grim, and sinister, as of one who is tormented by remorse ; his looks are restless and surly, as of those who fear to be detected in crime ; he is a minister of the altar, he is a priest professing the same principles, the same creed that you do. He is a Roman Catholic priest as you are, and a good man at the bottom. But he is denied the blessings of a family, nay, it is a crime for him to have one. Woman—the gift of God to man—is denied him, against the laws of God and nature. He is a good man ; he keeps faithfully his vows ; he could not suffer his offspring to be branded with the opprobrious name of *sacrilegious*. He has struggled very hard to conquer human passions, but in the process his heart has become petrified. The world has not any charm for him. He has struggled against the feelings of envy and hatred that human nature prompted in him at the sight of happy fathers, but still



he cannot help being annoyed by the noisy presence of innocent children. He may show sympathy for his fellow creatures, but it comes out of his mouth as cold as the breath of a dying man. This unnatural law is rendered most insupportable to the priest by the example of seeing in the same religion other priests who enjoy all the privileges of man, by the mere accident of being born of Greek descent. The world has no charms for the Latin Catholic priest, and he is unfitted to fulfil heartily and zealously the sacred mission that Jesus Christ gave him to fulfil. I have hitherto spoken of the good priests, but see how many thousands we have of them, not to mention the friars. Soldiers I deem noxious to society because they consume and do not produce. The immense number of priests and monks, besides being in the same category as the former, are pernicious to society, on account of their idleness."

During that part of my discourse wherein I spoke of him and his family, the face of the bishop wore that happy smile that betokened happiness, and once a tear glistened in his eye; but when I made the comparison with the Latin priests, he moved restlessly on his chair and his countenance assumed a serious expression. At the end he exclaimed:

"Oh, blessed Saint Pasmuzio! He had the courage to propose the marriage of the Greek priest in the second Council of Nice, and his eloquence was so great that, notwithstanding the opposition of all the Council, he carried his purpose. I have mused on this subject many a time, and I have not been able to discover a plausible reason, why, in the Council of Trent, they decreed such a law."

"If we recur to history," I replied, "we may find the clue to help us in search of the motive influencing the Council of Trent. Complete sway over the Christian world, has always been the ambition of the popes. Not content with their moral authority, they aspired to become temporal masters. Having no brute force at their command, they called, at times, to their



aid, the French, the Spaniards, and the Germans ; and this, for several centuries, brought ruin upon Italy. Having experienced, however, that the very foreigners they employed, supported by the people, turned against them, the popes must have necessarily concluded that an army, entirely attached to, and dependent on them, was also needful. This scheme they accomplished by depriving the priests of the sacred rights of nature, and of the ineffable ties of paternity. Thus, making of them a sect of men, unsympathizing with humanity, and bound together for self-support, they made them the instruments of their ambition. The love of country is akin to the love of family ; and if the heart of man is destitute of the latter, he cannot feel a great deal for the former. The priests become thus qualified to exercise their immense influence over the people, in furtherance of the ambitious claims of the popes.

“ The friars, Benedetto da Fojano and Savonarola, who rose up to unmask the popes, died, glorious victims of their enterprise ; but their ashes, up to the present time, have begotten many a priest, who is waiting for the first occasion, to shake off the thralldom in which he pines.”

“ As for the popes,” answered the bishop, dryly, “ whom it is my duty to venerate and respect, I beg of you, sir, not to allude any more, as for the priests, I have no pity for them. It is of their own free will, and at the age of manhood, that they take the vow.”

“ I beg of you to be so indulgent,” I replied, “ as to excuse my not coinciding with you. I feel the deepest pity for those beings ! They embrace the position as an office or as a trade. Far from rejoicing, fathers groan at the birth of a male child. They know that after toils, cares, and expenses, to train and educate them, when they become adults, they have no occupation to give them. So they induce their children to become



priests or friars, as the means of gaining a sustenance for life, in the bliss of doing nothing."

The bishop shrugged his shoulders and arose from the table, and we all followed to take a cup of coffee in another room.

In the evening, whilst we were preparing to attend the christening of the first born of Mr. Lio, a son of the bishop came into our room, offering to accompany us. Under his guidance we did not go directly to the church, but stopped near the house of Lio, opposite the cathedral.

The square was full of people. A band of music waited at the door, and a great number of *masky*, from which the multitude remained at a prudent distance, were placed on the pavement. *Masky* is a peculiar, primitive kind of fireworks. They are in the form of musket barrels, three or four inches long, closed at one end, with a small hole at the lower extremity. They are loaded with gun-powder, and wadded with sand. Thousands of them are placed standing on the ground, in regular files. A man with a long stick, having at the end a lighted Roman candle, fires them in continuation, and with such dexterity that one report followed the other incessantly; finishing with three or four louder than the rest. The report of each piece is equal to that of a heavily loaded musket, and the last ones to that of a small piece of artillery. The *masky* are used in every kind of religious festival, and in the county towns, also for christenings.

The doors of Lio's house opened, and a sedan chair, adorned with velvet and gold, carried by two men, appeared. Mr. Lio, and his friends and relatives followed. The band began to play, the *masky* to be fired, and the people followed in the rear. We kept close to the chair.

When the pageantry arrived at the doors of the cathedral, the music ceased, the *masky* stopped firing, the curtains of the chair opened, and a stout old nurse entered the church, carrying on her extended arms a huge cushion of blue satin covered



with point lace, with heavy gold tassels hanging at the four corners. On it rested the infant, who gave evidence, at the moment, of the possession of a good pair of lungs. The rite of baptism over, the friends, who had gathered in the chapel, expressed their congratulations by throwing almond sugar-plums at the faces of Mr. Lio, god-father, and godmother.

Proceeding through the nave, our eyes went through a dangerous ordeal. The people gathered in the pews were provided with roasted hazel nuts, chick-peas, and horse-beans, which they threw mercilessly at our faces by handfuls. Then we returned to the house of Lio, with the same attendance of music and *masky*.

In an elegantly furnished bed-room, and on a richly clothed and curtained bed, six feet high from the floor, lay Mrs. Lio, whose wan face gave to her beauty a sentimental expression. We all entered to make the usual congratulations, and then adjourned to other rooms, where the evening was passed in dancing, and finished with a sumptuous supper.

At twelve o'clock the festival was over. We took leave of the bishop and family, as we had to start at four. Of the three sons of Monsignore the lawyer only accepted the invitation to join our party. The family retired to rest, and we began our preparations for the hunting party.



## CHAPTER VII.

### HUNTING PARTY.

Two hours riding on horseback brought us to an extensive farm house situated between Piana and Corleone. A tremendous noise and confusion prevailed there. Hundreds of men were seen, some lying on the ground, some walking, some drinking, some eating, some talking or laughing.

They were armed with fowling pieces or spears. An immense number of dogs were tied together, by twos and threes, some secured to the trunk of a tree, and others held by their owners. The uncertain light of a large lamp suspended on a pole, gave to this mass of creatures a wild and fearful aspect.

At our approach the howling of the dogs and the voices of the men, raised to quiet them, was tremendous. Domenico asked the first man we met, in a commanding tone :

“Where is your master?”

“In the house, excellency.”

“Show us the way.”

Within the house we found four gentlemen to whom Antonio introduced us. One of them was a young man not older than seventeen years, slender but strongly built. He wore one of those calm, pensive physiognomies, which speak intelligence, firmness, and goodness. He was introduced as the son of baron Bentivegna. I felt attracted towards him, and instinctively placed myself beside him, and began a conversation.



Whilst partaking of some refreshments, the clang of a trumpet was heard from the outside, followed by the barking of dogs and yelling of men.

"Is it time to start?" asked Antonio.

"No, sir," answered a gentleman: "our people are going to surround the wood. It is better for us to stay here one hour under cover, than to wait there in the damp air, until their preparations are made."

The wood in which we hunted was a forest of a few miles in circumference. The men had all been placed around it, and we took position in the central part at sufficient distances to prevent us from injuring one another.

The loud blast of a horn gave the signal of action. Simultaneously, the men stationed on the outside, commenced an inward march, tending to a central point; some firing with blank cartridges, some whipping-in, and some thrusting their spears in the thickets. The firing of guns, the clanging of trumpets, the beating of drums and the hallooming of the whippers-in, made such an unearthly and terrific sound, that, but for the barking of the dogs, it would have seemed like the sudden attack of a fortress.

It was daylight. I was in great suspense, looking sharply at every branch, at every shrub, holding my fowling piece. The uproar on the outside was steadily increasing and approaching the centre. After a while the heavy report of a gun was heard, and then another, and another. I trembled with excitement, and felt a cold perspiration on my forehead. I was a few seconds in this state when I saw a huge head behind the shrubs which fronted me in the small opening where I was situated. I took my aim and fired. A tremendous growl was heard, and the colossal monster sprang towards me, his eyes flashing fire and his jaws extended. At this moment a dog sprang after him and was disemboweled by the enraged beast, with a turn of his head. The dog gave a dismal howl of dis-



tress and fell lifeless. This interruption gave me time to cock my pistols. I fired both, but the balls did not hit a vital part. The boar receded for a moment, when a fierce bull-dog came to my assistance ; but the strife was not long enough to give time to finish loading my gun, before the dog gave his last howl. The beast was infuriated, and lost no time in attacking me. I drew my hunting-knife and jumped behind a tree. He was already but three yards' distance, and seemed wondering a moment whether to spring to the right or to the left of the tree, when the crack of a gun was heard just behind my head, and the boar fell dead. In turning round I saw Mr. Bentivegna, with his placid face, putting a cartridge into his gun. Whilst I was facing the beast which momentarily threatened my life, I did not feel any sense of fear, but all my faculties were concentrated in the main thought how and where to direct the only blow I should be able to inflict, the skill and success of which would have decided my fate ; but when I saw the cause of fear annihilated, I realized my position, and felt terror-struck. However, this was the affair of a moment ; I forced my mind, to recover, somewhat from the attack of fear, and addressed my liberator. I said, " I owe something for your timely help."

" We have no time for compliments, Mr. Balzani," he answered, with a sweetly animated face ; " load your barrel, time is precious."

And in fact the outside uproar became every minute louder and the reports of the hunter's guns more frequent. Hares, rabbits, bucks, wild cats, and other smaller animals, and birds, were seen darting from thicket to thicket, from tree to tree.

This hunting excitement lasted for an hour, after the men had stopped their march on a circular line which marked the limits of our field of action.

Finally the blast of a horn put an end to the uproar ; three cheers of *Viva Maria* followed, and all remained still. It had



been preconcerted that, after this signal it was absolutely forbidden to fire a gun.

I remained where I was, contemplating the monstrous boar, which lay at my feet, and a hare and a buck that I had shot, remaining where they fell.

A few minutes passed and I heard footsteps behind me. Turning round I saw Bentivegna, who, with an animated face, said :

“Please, Mr. Balzani, follow me. We are going to join now.”

We urged our way through narrow and obstructed paths and thickets, until we came to a circular opening covered with short green grass, surrounded by gigantic trees, whose branches made a canopy above it. At a little distance sprang a tiny stream of pure water which flowed down in a little dingle. The tall trees for a few acres around stood separate and free from brush, so that every object could be seen.

Here Onofrio and the son of the bishop had already met, and the others of the party came in afterwards. Then all the multitude of assistants with their attendance of horses, mules, dogs, etc., assembled on the outskirts of the opening within our sight. Some of them carried the game and deposited it in the centre of the place we had selected for our rendezvous. Four men were hardly able to drag the beast which had nearly cost me my life. A mule was brought in, loaded with our meal, consisting of cold chickens, eggs, cheese, sausages, and other refreshments. Whilst we ate, the men laid down to rest on the outside of the circle, except the stewards who waited on us.

Our meal over, the horn was blown, and the attendants arose and divided themselves into parties, from five to ten, according to the more or less space they could find among the trees. Several mules were unloaded of their heavy burdens of large loaves of bread, round cheeses, and *otri* of wine. *Otri*



are bags made out of the whole sheep-skin, preserving the form of a sheep without its head, and used for holding oil or wine. Then came the cutting into pieces with hunting-knives the bread and cheese, and their distribution in due proportions to each group.

The *otri* were placed at different points, and from them each party drew into a tin can, which was passed around amongst them. Every man had adorned his cap with a branch of oleander with its cluster of flowers.

Whilst they were eating, laughing, talking, singing, with the accompaniment of the barking of dogs, we sat on the soft grass engaged in a lively conversation. The first topic was the feat of young Bentivegna. I asked him how it chanced that he came to my succor. He replied in an unassuming manner, addressing the whole party :

“I was sitting on a stump in my allotted spot with the cocked gun in the hollow of my left hand, listening attentively for some sound which might indicate approaching game, when I heard the report of Mr. Balzani’s gun. The vengeful growl of the boar and the death howling of the dog apprised me of Mr. Balzani’s danger, and I moved towards him, against our rules. The following reports of two pistols, and the very character of the growl and of the barking of another dog, made me perceive that there was no time to lose, and I ran for life and death. As for my killing the beast that was no prowess, for I fired at his mouth.”

The morning passed very pleasantly in telling hunting tales and adventures. In the afternoon the game was placed on mules adorned with branches and flowers, we mounted on horseback, and all the caravan gloriously entered the nearest town of —.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CROSS OF THE VESPER.

THE month of October had swiftly glided away in travelling and sports, to the great amusement and satisfaction of our guest, Mr. de Tourville. I was now again at home, engaged in the usual monotonous routine of life. There came with it the consciousness of the void, the blank in my existence. My mother and Bishop D. did not fail in preaching to me resignation. The bishop whispered in my ears, submission to the will of God forms a part of our religious duties. I knew that, and I had submitted, but this did not fill the void that I felt in my life.

Mr. de Tourville had become more attached to me than he was to Onofrio, and his gentlemanly manners and cultivation of mind and heart had gained my esteem. He came every afternoon to my house, and thence I took him to observe the churches, and fragments of antiquities that the generality of the people see every day but do not understand. In the evening sometimes we went to the opera, but more frequently into society. In admiring curiosities, I never heard him utter that unpleasant *chez-nous*—we have something better—although he was highly endowed with his national prerogatives of ready wit and brilliant facetiousness; it was I who had to praise his country sometimes, but he always answered modestly.

In this manner I had loitered through the month of November, when, one Sunday afternoon, Ettore called at my house and apprised me of his intention to start soon for a visit to the



Levant. He invited me to go with him, since Andrea and Domenico were to be of the caravan.

This news took me by surprise. Travelling abroad is so rare amongst us that the idea of missing three of my best friends for a lapse of time seriously disturbed me. I showed him with regret how my being an *employé* made it impossible for me to travel abroad.

"I am sorry to leave you," he said with concern, "but I will give you a substitute which will pay you for the temporary loss of us three. A relative of mine, Baron Micali from —, came lately to settle in Palermo. The baroness and an only child form all his family. I have spoken of you to them, promising (except in case that you would go with us) to leave in you a worthy substitute to take care of them in my absence. I recommend to you particularly my dear little cousin. They live out of town in one of those beautiful mansions on the coast half a mile from the gate of the city. If you will go now I shall have the pleasure of introducing you. It is but a pleasant walk."

Mr. de Tourville, who was present, looked vexed. Ettore asked him if he would favor us with his company, but he declined with politeness, saying that he had come to take me in the evening to a party at the French consul's, but seeing that I had made an engagement, he would only accompany us as far as the city walls.

On our way we passed before the church of Saint Anna, and Mr. de Tourville was loud in praise of the facade of that temple, constructed entirely of marble, rich with pillars, columns, and colossal statues. A little further there is another square called *Piazza di Valguarnera*. Facing the square is the convent of Saint Anna which heads the corner of a large street called Aragona. The building at this corner leaves an angular space of ten feet. Here squatted a *Zingaro*, sitting on a wooden stool a foot high, with his portable forge on the pave



ment, a small anvil stuck in the ground, two pincers, two small hammers, a small heap of coal, and a blackened face. With his arms folded he was waiting for a customer who should want some iron article for the kitchen mended, a horse-bit, or an iron bedstead repaired.

The class of men named *Zingari*—Gipsies, who exercise their petty black-smith trade at the corners of some parts of the city, are so named after the wanderers who introduced their trade, and the fashion of squatting in a corner, and carrying off on their back, in the evening, their forge and implements.

But let us return to our subject. Just behind the *Zingaro*, where the two buildings form an angle, there was a small marble pillar, seven feet high, with a slender column resting on it, and surmounted by an iron cross.

Reaching this spot Mr. de Tourville slackened his pace, his attention being attracted by the classical physiognomy of the *Zingaro*. He had a drooping figure, and was poorly dressed. His head was large, his forehead well developed, his hair grey and curled. A large nose, large mouth, large grey eyes, and a mass of wrinkles from brow to chin completed his likeness.

Contrary to his delicacy, Mr. de Tourville almost stopped, regarding fixedly that face. The *Zingaro* looked at him steadily and grinned.

Mr. de Tourville perceiving his false position, and in order to avoid the rising anger, depicted in the sparkling grey eye of the old man ; raised his head as if to look at the building, and perceiving the column with the cross, asked us aloud, what that meant ; striving to appear simply curious.

Ettore and I looked at each other perplexed, but did not answer.

The French gentleman, in order to make an end of the scene, asked again, eagerly : “ Do you not know what that cross alludes to ? ”



The Zingaro, who could not forego the pleasure of having an occasion to speak, and vent, in any manner, his anger, answered for us, in a passionate tone :

“ This pillar was, once upon a time, situated in the middle of this square, this cross means that the earth on which you stand is filled with French bones. They oppressed our people, sucked their blood, and dishonored their women, and the Sicilians made the vespers, and killed them all, all, all, all, and they buried them down here, all, all, all !”

Every time he pronounced the word all, he gave tremendous blows with the hammer on the anvil, with flashing eyes, then he continued : “ Since I learned the meaning of this cross, I have become proud of my sitting here, because, when I work, I always think of those bones, and it seems to me as if I pounded with my hammer the enemies of my country . . . . I mean of my king,” he added, looking frightened at his own words.

Mr. de Tourville, at the first explosion of the Zingaro, turned as pale as death. We tried to stop the Zingaro by signs with our eyes, and to draw our friend away. But the first did not heed our sign, in the heat of his excitement, and the latter remained on the spot, as if transfixed.

I was at a loss to guess, how the Zingaro knew the history attached to that monument, since the poor people, generally, know nothing of these historical mementos.

Finally, we succeeded in drawing Mr. de Tourville along with us, who had already become more composed.

Ettore and I felt distressed, and could not utter a word. On arriving at the corner of Aragona our friend stopped and faced us.

“ We are very sorry,” ejaculated Ettore, “ for your having been annoyed by that old man.”

“ If you knew me, gentlemen,” he said, in his blandest tone of voice, but not without betraying emotion, “ you would



understand the matter differently. The physiognomy of that man first attracted me, as if I had seen some one like him in a dream, or in some interesting circumstance. I tried to change my thoughts, when his words fell on my ears like a knell, an omen, a prophecy. The subject of his exclamations struck my heart painfully as a Frenchman, but as a citizen of the world, I appreciated his principles and his patriotism. I like that man, and I will go to shake hands with him."

He said these last words with an enthusiastic emphasis, and moved to go back.

Fearing some scene that might compromise all of us, we detained him, and he continued :

"My father was an officer in the republican army, and a high officer under Napoleon. Fostered and bred with exalted republican principles, my aspiration, the object of my visions, is to see universal freedom and brotherhood ; hence I have taken part in all the republican secret societies which burn in Paris like the fire under your Etna. My father, alarmed for my safety, though republican himself, has sent me away for a long tour. Now that you know me, you will not hinder my going to shake hands with that man."

Thus saying, he started, and we followed.

The Zingaro had retaken his former position. Mr. de Tourville approached him, and with a fervent tone of voice, extending his hand, said : " Shake hands with me, good man."

The blacksmith stared at him, and said, with a dignified manner, looking at his right hand : " I would do it willingly, *Excellenza*, if my hand were not dirty."

But our companion snatched it, and shook it vehemently. I suppose that there was some sign of recognition in the touch of their hands, for the Zingaro assumed a look of pleased surprise, whilst the Frenchman ejaculating, " even a brother !" thrust the hand in his pocket and pulled out a purse. But the old man got up and with a serious, dignified manner, said:



"Stop, sir! My name is Mariano Zecca, and the Zeccas have never touched money but that which they earned with their work. Good bye, sir."

They shook hands again, and in going away de Tourville said to him, in a peculiar manner: "We shall meet some other time."

During his stay in Palermo, I could never draw from him a single word which might give the least clue to the mystery involved in this meeting.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### BARON MICALI.

BARON MICALI was a middle-sized man, of about sixty years of age. His complexion was fair and florid. He had a high forehead, small nose and small mouth. His eyes were of a vivid blue. His hair, as white as snow, was combed backwards, and fell profusely on his shoulders. His countenance was amiable, benevolent and trust-inspiring. We arrived at his house towards evening, and found him sitting on the Chinese piazza, with the baroness, enjoying the breeze and beautiful view of the sea, which, from below the mansion, spread in a large curve limited by two capes, and lost itself in the vast expanse beyond.

As he saw us, his countenance beamed with pleasure. At my introduction he shook my hand cordially, saying, that I could deem his house my own. The baroness was a lady under the medium size, some twenty years younger than her husband. She had black hair, oval face, and a clear olive complexion; her features were regular, her eyes light hazel, with a calm movement, which spoke hauteur. In a kindly manner



she presented me the tip of her delicate fingers, and offered us chairs.

"Where is my dear little cos?" exclaimed Ettore.

"In the garden," answered the baron, good humoredly; "you know she is so fond of flowers. She lives the whole day amongst them. Go to surprise her, and introduce our friend Mr. Balzani."

The garden contained more than an acre of ground, with fruit-trees so well chosen that there were fruits to be found hanging on them in all seasons, and so ingeniously planted that they left room for many beds of flowers; the whole forming a beautiful, picturesque view. At the further extremity there was a spacious summer-house covered with climbing plants, and within it, a round, white marble table, with stools of the same material.

As we advanced in the garden, an elegant little figure, wrapped in a white dress, fluttered from the summer-house towards us, uttering, with a musical silvery voice, "Oh, cousin Ettore, I have expected you these two days." . . . . . She had perceived only her relative from among the branches, but just as she came into the opening, and unexpectedly beheld me following him, her sweet guileless face acquired a puzzled expression, visible by a flash on her face and a pout on her lips; and her tongue stopped short what she had begun to say.

Ettore came to her relief by saying with a laugh, "Mr. Balzani—my dear little cousin, Adelina."

"I am very much pleased to make your acquaintance, Mr. Balzani," she said, with that unrestrained appearance and visible charm in her countenance that only innocence and virtue can produce.

She was not older than sixteen, with slender and graceful form. Her face was oval, her complexion rosy, her hair dark brown, her brow large, her nose straight, perhaps, with a slight



tendency to the aquiline rather than the pure Grecian ; her eyes were large and deep blue, softened by the long dark eye-lashes that fringed, nay, almost covered them ; her mouth was adorned with pearly teeth, and with a sweet smile lurking continually on the graceful lips. The whole impression was that of a sweet and guileless nature.

"This naughty cousin of mine," she continued, with innocent, winning manner, free from reserve or hauteur, has very often spoken of you, since our arrival in Palermo. Oh, Mr. Balzani, you do not know how vexatious and naughty he is."

"She is a little rustic pert, Balzani," answered Ettore, amused, "and I leave to you the task of polishing her ; and to you, my dear cos, that of reforming him, because he is a misanthropist."

Miss Adelina turned on her cousin an assumed glance of offended pride, with the most enchanting pout on her lips, and said : "I know that I am a silly school-girl, but you are the most impertinent chevalier that ever lived in christendom."

"Where did you read that expression, cos ?" continued Ettore, in a teasing manner.

By this time we had reached the portico, where we found the baron chuckling. A fisherman stood outside, holding in both hands a small basket of fishes, all moving, and, now and then, one of them jumping out of the basket on the ground. The baron was a good-hearted man, but he was fond of tantalizing. The man had bony and swarthy features. He had on his back a long ample brown coat with sleeves, and a hood of heavy goat-wool cloth, lined and trimmed with scarlet, and large oval buttons. The nether man was covered with a pair of breeches ending above the knees, and leaving legs and feet bare.

Just at that moment the baron said : "Well, I take them ; here is your money , carry the fishes round to the cook."

The fisherman threw back his hood, took off his cap, and,



with extended arms and bowed head, exclaimed: "I thank your charity, Eccellenza. May the Saints Cosma and Damiano\* bless you and that sweet Signorina."

"Hold!" interrupted the baron, "did you ask me, for those fishes, more than they are worth?"

"No, Eccellenza," answered the man, piteously and with alarm; "it is just the price I had to sell them for in the market. May Saint Elmo† forsake me in time of distress, if I do not tell the truth."

"I know," replied the baron, "that fishermen's honesty is proverbial; but why do you make such a fuss, then?"

"Because," answered the man, nodding his head, and taking a survey around, to ascertain that there were no eaves-droppers—"because, entering the city I have to pay duty, and money for the license to sell them; not calculating the policeman who comes round to pick a fish for his wife. And finally, I have to stand and halloo for a couple of hours to sell them; and my children are hungry."

This last word he accompanied with the gesture of opening widely his mouth, and thrusting in it several times the fingers and thumb of the right hand joined together.

"Poor people!" ejaculated Miss Adelina, with a tear trickling in her eye.

The evening passed pleasantly; perhaps the most pleasantly to me of any in five months.

The baroness, being an intelligent and well-educated lady her conversation was very interesting. The baron, although not so well educated, had travelled a great deal; and with his great knowledge of the world, and his amiable and facetious manners, his tales and anecdotes, proved to be very good com-

\* Those two saints are the patrons of the fishermen.

† A saint that fishermen invoke in the time of a storm.



pany. Miss Adelina, in answering her quizzing cousin, displayed intelligence, wit, and education beyond her age.

When we left, late in the evening, all the family exacted from me a promise to come and see them frequently.

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## CHAPTER X.

### A HIGHWAYMAN.

For several months I had continued my visits at baron Micali's, which by degrees had become so frequent that if I missed an afternoon the next day I received an amiable scolding from the baroness, and a prolonged pouting from Miss Adelina. Our acquaintance ripened into intimacy, and I was esteemed as a brother.

As she was fond of flowers I delighted in giving her a knowledge of botany, and instructed her by conversational and practical observations, in the structure, functions, and classifications of those families of plants and flowers, which were within her reach in her daily life. Once whilst we were attentively observing with a magnifying glass the stamen of a flower, the baron entered stealthily the summer house, and placing his hand on my shoulder, said :

"Well, what are we doing now?"

"Giving lessons," I answered, without moving.

"You will prove to be my ruin, Mr. Balzani," he continued, laughing, "see how many pots, and flowers, and bulbs, and seeds, I am compelled to buy every day; and you, Balzani, are the cause." And so he went chuckling out of the place.

I pretended to take him in earnest and continued my interrupted explanations with an assumed seriousness. When I finished, she raised to me an appealing glance, but so sweet



and so pure, as if the angel of innocence had blessed her with a kiss.

To counteract the impression that such a look made in my mind, I looked at her and laughed.

"Well, Mr. Balzani," she exclaimed with a pout, "you are such a strange man that one cannot comprehend when you are serious, and when you pretend to be so."

The simplicity, vivacity, and gracefulness of her manners, and the soul-radiance of her countenance, in the act of speaking, charmed, enthralled my heart. When in her company I felt myself heroic and my soul radiant with bliss. Still I did not love her; or I should rather say I thought that what I felt was not love.—What, love a child?—I only esteemed her.—But now this child had with surprising celerity become a beautifully developed young lady—pshaw! preposterous—it was impossible to fall in love with a sacred trust—the good faith—friendship—honor—hospitality—Oh, no! nonsense! I do not love, because I must not love her. Thus ran my thoughts. Still when the hour approached to go I became nervous and sought to make my toilet to the best advantage. So days and weeks rolled on. For months I had left Mr. de Tourville under the care of Antonio and Onofrio, excusing myself with continual engagements. One morning I was expecting him at eight o'clock to breakfast with me, and go at nine to the court to witness the manners and procedure of our tribunals.

I looked at my watch—half past eight—and I continued to pace to and fro, rather annoyed than disappointed, when my servant said: Mr. de Tourville—and immediately the owner of this name appeared in the room exclaiming—"Santa Diavolo,"—and with bursts of laughter, made three turns in the room, shouting the same words at every turn. Finally he threw himself into an arm chair, until he had exhausted his vein of laughter.

I looked at him amazed.



When he at last composed himself he said to me, "Excuse me, my friend; pardon my uncouth manners, but I could not help it, I saw such a funny thing! I am half an hour too late for my engagement, but how could I help it?"

I thought that something very extraordinary must have happened to him, and waited impatiently for the explanation.

"Imagine," he began, "I was coming here just at 8 o'clock, when two streets before this I saw four men fighting desperately, two against two, and at every blow they ejaculated, *Eh! Santa Diavolo*, but with such an emphasis, as if in those words were comprised all manly strength and power of vengeance. I stopped to witness this strange combat, expecting every moment that a policeman would come and put an end to the conflict. But the fact was that after some twenty minutes of strife, all parties appeared satisfied with what they had given and received, and parted with broken heads, and pounded bones, without any interference. But please explain to me the significance of that *Santo Diavolo*?"

Amused, I explained to him that these two words are deemed by the uncultivated classes a big oath, a great blasphemy, whilst it is nothing but an abuse of language. "They do not know how to swear, and, when in a state of anger or passion they utter these words," I concluded.

"*C'est droll!—c'est droll!*" ejaculated my friend, whilst taking breakfast.

At a quarter before nine o'clock we were ascending the large red marble stairs of the Palace of the Tribunals. On arriving at the first landing I saw a beautiful peasant girl sitting on the first step, her head bent and in a flood of tears. Her handsome face struck me as one that I had seen before, and moved by compassion and curiosity at the same time, I stepped near to her saying, "What ails you, my good girl? Can I do any thing for you?"

She raised her head and in a supplicating manner exclaimed,



“ Oh ! Eccellenza, if you have a soul, help me, save my husband, and the Madonna will save your soul.”

In raising her hand toward me, a cameo on her finger attracted my attention. Through that ring I recognized her. A painful recollection flashed through my mind, and I said, “ Be not in such despair. I shall do all that is possible for your husband. But do not remain here. Come to my house at 22 o'clock. It is not far from this place, and we shall see ;” thus saying I handed her my card.

She took the card, and with hopelessness depicted on her face said, “ I will go even to perdition to save my husband,”

“ *Pauvre fille ! Elle est tres belle !*” exclaimed Mr. de Tourville ; “ but, please tell me what you meant by 22 o'clock ! I cannot understand your mode of reckoning time.”

“ This is one of the customs of our country, which goes back to old centuries. We count the hours twenty-four instead of twice twelve. The first hour beginning at dusk, and thus making the tour ; the next day at dusk it is 24 o'clock. So, 22 o'clock is two hours before dusk. But now, the trouble for us is, that we have to keep two different times, one for our daily life, and the new way for the courts and offices. Besides the two modes of keeping time never coincide. For instance in December, 1 o'clock, p. m., is counted twenty hours, whilst in June it is seventeen.”

The husband of the peasant girl was a man who bore the reputation of being a terrible highwayman, although he had never been indicted as such. On this occasion there having been a highway robbery and murder committed, he was arrested on suspicion, and the *vox populi* declared that he was to be hung. Having no money to engage a good lawyer, the attorney-general had appointed for the defense one of those harpies, dregs of the bar, who having nothing to do, swarm always around that functionary to get one of those appointments in order to



show that they do something. But woe to those poor fellows who fall into their clutches !

The same evening I saw my friend Giuseppe Nobile, to whom I related this incident, and I fervently begged that he and his father would defend the man, if for nothing else, for her sake.

“ Can you guess who she is ? ” I asked.

“ How can I ? ”

“ She is that bashful girl, Maria, the daughter of that Signora Spinoso, who kept farm, and whose husband had been sacrificed to the profligacy of the officer. She did not recognize me this morning, but I remembered her, and, more than all, she still wears on her finger the cameo that my blessed angel wife presented to her ! ”

“ Is it possible ! ” exclaimed Giuseppe in a tone of surprise.

“ So it is, ” I returned impressively ; “ this afternoon she will be at my house, and I shall send her to you. I hope that you will do for her just as much as you would for me. ”

Eight days passed and Giuseppe came to the chancellory, to tell me that the man had been acquitted.

I was in my library on the same evening when the servant announced that a countryman with a woman wanted to see me.

A tall, muscular man, in the garb of a peasant, presented himself. His physiognomy was rather pleasant, although a mark of resolution might be perceived in his twinkling, large, black eyes, and in the habitual closing of his lips.

The sight of the woman who accompanied him, told me, at once, who he was. They both entered with happy smiling countenances. A struggle ensued between this man and myself, he endeavoring to take my hand, by force, to kiss it, and I endeavoring to prevent it ; at the end, his strength carried the day, and I had to yield to physical power.

After they had exhausted all their stock of thanks and blessings, I caused them to sit down and take a glass of wine. The



husband, having drained his glass, said, with a solemn voice :  
“ The great debt I owe you, for having saved me, is made greater by the saved honor of my wife, through your means. This is graven in my heart never to be erased.

“ That puppy of a lawyer, destined by the Attorney General for my defence, perceiving that he could not extort money from this poor woman, had passed to insulting proposals.”

“ Dwell no more on past things,” I answered : and turning to his companion :

“ Look at me, Maria, and see if you can recognize me,” said I to the handsome peasant woman.

She looked at me earnestly, with a puzzled countenance. After a little while I asked, “ Who gave you that ring.” The circumstance flashed on her recollection, and her countenance brightened.

“ Oh, that dear young lady,” she exclaimed, with emotion. “ If I had not forgotten her address, I would have applied to her in my distress.”

I waved my hand, and said gloomily, “ she is in Heaven.”

“ What !” she exclaimed, startled ; “ that fine young lady, who gave me this ring !”

“ Yes,” I replied, “ she became my wife, and now is no more.”

An unbroken silence, for a few minutes, prevailed, before she said, “ I think you were one of the party that morning at the breakfast on the brook’s table-land ; but you are so changed ! that long black beard and mustaches have changed your face. But why did you not tell me before ?”

“ Because,” I answered, “ the case of your husband being a difficult one, and not knowing if we could save him, I did not like to make myself known to you in advance.”

“ But now that it is all over,” continued I, turning to her husband ; “ with a beautiful and tender wife to protect—a wife who loves you to distraction—don’t you think that your posi-



tion in society is a wrong one ? You were innocent of the crime you were accused of, but your name has such a dreadful notoriety ; and public opinion was so strongly against you, that you have had a very narrow escape. I do not presume to sermonise to you. I am a man, and I have my own sins to answer for. I speak to you as a brother, as a father. See how many dangers she must have run in a large city, without protection ! What would have become of her if your lot were sealed ? I speak to you in the name of society in general. You enjoyed once a good name in your circle. Society, far from wishing to destroy the outcast, endeavors to reinstate him, and increase the number of the good."

Whilst I was speaking, I could perceive that the man was struggling with extreme emotion. On his countenance could be seen blended, grief, anger, love, and despair.

With a voice that seemed like a sound coming from a cavern, and a big drop falling from his eye, he exclaimed :

" Oh, if you knew all ! . . . . Once I was deemed one of the best lads of my parish. Very young I could till, prune, graft, and bleed a horse. By my being very jovial and a staunch friend, I always found a chair left empty for me everywhere. When I saw this girl I fell desperately in love with her. Her mother soon died, and she remained without a guide, for, her brothers had to attend to business. One happy day, in going out of the church, I followed her, and told her of my love ; she encouraged my love, because, she only blushed ; thus we were betrothed.

" One day I found Picone, the *Capitan d' Arme*, (captain of the rural-mounted-police,) talking with her before her door.

If you had seen, sir, how beautiful she appeared to me in her haughty manner, commanding that rascal away, with scornful eyes and lips ! Excited with anger, I asked his business there. He put me aside with contempt, calling me an insignificant boor. This raised my passion to the highest pitch,



and I struck him a blow on his face, which made him reel. Recovering from the shock, he made a movement to draw his pistol, but my knife, pointed suddenly at his eyes, was a very strong argument to convince him that he could not cope with me. So he went away, and I married the girl. But, alas! that marked the period of my fall!

“The villain was seen no more in our district. But there happened to be a highway robbery perpetrated near us, and in consequence of his reporting me as a suspicious character, I was hunted down, and had to take refuge, with my dear wife, in the hollow of caverns. People say he is associated with robbers, and I believe it, because after that time many thefts were committed in my neighborhood—a place usually quiet—and the scoundrel accused me as the author of all, circulating such descriptions and tales about me as would curdle the blood in your veins. Love, jealousy, fear, anger, hopelessness, drove me to despair; my fellow creatures were set against me, and, but for the goodness and tender love of this worshipped woman, I should have been driven to excesses. In this state of existence I became short of means. Perplexed, harassed, exasperated, as the state of my mind was; the sight of my dear lamb, prostrated by hunger, in the corner of a grotto was what human nature could not endure. The last string of virtue snapped asunder, and I was lost.

My fall completed the triumph of the persecuting monster, the only jewel of life that remained to me, the pride of a pure conscience, and my own self-respect. But I can swear before God, that all the atrocious imputations against me are slanders, because I have never injured the persons of my fellow beings. I beg of you, sir, not to judge too severely of my actions, but that I may have the comfort of knowing there exists a man who pities me.”

“Yes,” I answered, mournfully; “I pity you with all my heart. But do not despair, trust in an ever ruling Providence,



by trying a life of reformation; and leave to the Almighty the doom of the wicked man."

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" sobbed the afflicted woman, aloud.

"I shall try," concluded the husband, with resolution; "and sooner or later, I hope in God, I shall be able to redeem my name."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### HYDROPHOBIA.

A SLIGHT apoplectic attack spread consternation among the friends and relatives of Bishop D. For eight days I remained by the bed of the venerable man who had been my guide, friend, and protector. With a note I apprised Baron Micali of the calamity, and begged him to excuse my temporary absence. All my thoughts, my energy, and solicitude, were concentrated in soothing, nursing, and giving relief to the man who had the highest claims on my respect, gratitude and affection.

When the disease had lost its virulence, and convalescence was making its slow progress, he was permitted to see his friends a little time. On this occasion I made an acquaintance which in after times ripened into intimacy, and has some importance in the history of my life. This individual was a Pauline monk, whom I shall call Father Carmelo. He was tall and bony, with black hair and eyes, large face, aquiline nose and olive complexion. He had not the rosy cheeks, plumpness and devil-may-care countenance, so characteristic of friars. His countenance was rigid and stern at the first sight, but for those with whom he was on friendly terms, it acquired a kind of solemn joviality which shadowed forth the philosopher and



the man of the world. His rather sarcastic manners spoke of deeply-rooted disappointments in life. As he entered the room, the eyes of the bishop sparkled with pleasure, and extending his hand, he uttered with a feeble voice—

“Oh, my friend! I have longed to see you; but the doctors forbade me to see any one. By the by, I take this occasion to link two good friends of mine with the tie of friendship. This is Alfio Balzani—Father Carmelo. My life is rapidly ebbing, and I wish to give to my dear Alfio a staunch, worthy friend.”

“A very good acquisition,” retorted the father, sneeringly, “that of a surly monk; and this, too, in your stead!”

“Oh! do not say so,” replied the bishop, gazing at him steadfastly; “you know whose son Balzani is, and when you learn his feelings and his temper, you will acknowledge that he needs the friendship of a wise and worthy man.”

“Yes, monsignore,” repeated the friar, in the same sarcastic tone, “worthy, wise! In fact, my name is celebrated! I think that I ought to recur to the experiment of Erostratus to obtain a celebrated name. Still,” he continued, offering me his hand, “accept my friendship for what it may be worth.”

So saying, he pressed my hand with force, but without any other outward demonstration of feeling.

When he went away, I coolly thanked the bishop for the introduction of Father Carmelo.

“Are you not pleased?” asked he, eagerly.

“Generally, I dislike monks,” I replied, in a somewhat surly manner.

“Why, boy!” exclaimed the bishop, glaring at me; “is it possible you have not yet learned, that in every class of men there are good and bad? It is not the cowl that makes the monk. You must chase from your mind that Utopian idea of perfection in man; it will court disappointment, and end in misanthropy. This monk is a man of the world, a philosopher,



and a learned man, and purified by misfortunes. When you have tried him you will like him."

"Monsignore," I replied, "excuse my foolishness; I shall treasure up the friendship of Father Carmelo; for, accredited by you, it cannot be but good."

The occasion which had absorbed, almost entirely, my thoughts having ceased to be pressing, I felt strongly the necessity of visiting Baron Micali.

On the afternoon of the same day I was nervously completing my toilet, when Mr. de Tourville was announced.

"*Maledizione!*" I exclaimed, within myself—"just at the very moment I am going out."

"Did you tell him I was in?" I asked the servant.

"Yes, sir."

I tried to put on all the smiles that I could collect, to cover the vexation I felt as I entered the parlor. After many, to me, tedious expressions of pleasure at seeing me after so long a time, he began to broach the motive of his visit, saying:

"To-night we have a meeting of friends, whose object is to arrange a party, for the festival of the night of Saint Peter. They say it is something worth seeing." . . . . At this moment there was heard in the street the song of a man who was selling water-melons. Mr. de Tourville stopped speaking, and darted to the balcony.

This delay made me more nervous, every minute he remained seemed to me an hour.

"You will excuse my interruption," he said gayly, re-entering, "I am very much amused by the venders of fruits and other articles in this country. It seems that every article has its peculiar music, each changing in tune and time.\* I cannot understand a single word they say, but I am studying to know what they sell from the music they sing. Sometimes I stop in the street, with the wonderment of a boor, to look at a young

\* At the end of the book a few examples are given.



seller, who sings his tune in a beautiful tenor voice, worthy the opera-house, but with the draw-backs, that he turns scarlet with his efforts, and distorts his mouth into hideous grimaces. Can you tell me the origin of this custom?"

I perceived that he was not disposed to quit his theme, and turning nervously on my chair, I answered, "No, sir."

"Well," he continued, "let us return *a nos moutons*. As I was saying, you will favor me with your company this evening, to make the preliminary arrangements for the festival."

"I am very sorry," I replied, glad that the conversation began to take a turn towards concluding, "that I cannot have the pleasure of accepting your invitation, on account of an interesting engagement I have. In fact, I was getting ready to go out when you came in."

"*C'est dommage! C'est dommage!*" he exclaimed; "you will be of the party, anyhow?"

"I hope so."

"Well, *au revoir*, then."

Relieved from this incubus, I started with hilarity for my destination. It was usual for me in my walks to baron Micali's to amuse myself by building castles in the air. I was enjoying one of these fanciful entertainments, when passing the garden-gate, at a gun-shot distance from the mansion of the baron, I was startled by a horrible growling, and a feeling of intense pain in the calf of my right leg. Looking back I saw a dog quietly retreating. I raised my cane and struck the dog dead.

All this was the affair of a moment. A country woman appeared at the gate, glanced first at my white pantaloons stained with blood, then at the dead dog, and with a melancholy tone of voice said,

"Did he bite you, sir?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Alas! it was a mad dog, sir!"

These words fell upon my ear like the sentence of death, an



omen, a knell. I shuddered, my mind fell into a whirl, my hair rose slowly up, and a cold perspiration bedewed my frame. At this moment I perceived the sharp, monotonous sound from a blacksmith shop, a few steps distant. A thought flashed into my mind—a thought of salvation! Without delay—in a second, with a bound, I was in the shop. There I found a man making horse-shoe nails, and having in the fire a number of small bars of iron.

My cadaverous face, my frightened eyes, the bloody garment, and my hasty entrance, caused the smith to recede two steps, and to ask me in a husky tone, “What is the matter with you, sir?”

Without heeding his terrified look, or his alarmed question, I took off my pantaloons, sat down on the black earth, looked at the four bleeding wounds, and with a tremulous voice exclaimed, “Apply the hot iron to my leg!”

The man, paralyzed with terror, did not stir.

The moments were precious for my existence; every instant of inaction, served the fatal virus, to mingle with the blood, and certain limits passed, all remedies were vain.

The terrible nature of my situation sharpened my faculties, and quickened my resolution. On seeing the man so frightened, I did not lose a second, but taking a hot iron with the pincers, I applied it as deeply as human nature and man’s feelings could permit, whilst the flesh crackled and shrivelled under the operation.

Four times I repeated the same infliction on my limb, and finally prostrated by the sharpness of the pain, and the exhaustion of my moral powers, I leaned on the anvil nearly fainting.

As soon as I felt a little recovered from the shock I sent a stripling for a carriage, and in this manner I returned to my dwelling.

The distressing terror into which my mother, sister and brothers fell, at seeing me come home in such a state, cannot



be recounted. When I related my accident they were a little cheered, but my dear mother, after stroking my hair, wiping the perspiration from my forehead and kissing my cheek, asked me eagerly, "Are you sure that the hot iron reached the inmost part of the wounds?"

"Yes, dearest of mothers," I answered, pressing her to my heart.

This untoward event, which prevented my seeing the Micali's family, made me discover, against my own will, that what I felt for Miss Adelina was pure fervent love.

Whilst the life of the bishop was in danger, and my mind was entirely occupied for him, the thought of Miss Micali often intruded upon that of the bishop. But as I did not experience the kind of a thrill that I had been wont formerly to prove, I felt relieved, thinking I was right in my conception, that my feelings for her were nothing but those of warm friendship. Now, when all other pre-occupations had ceased, my ardent longings and the pantings of my heart told me clearly, to my great sorrow and shame, that I loved the child Adelina..



## CHAPTER XII.

### ADELINA.

THERE is nothing more distressing, than to be obliged to lie in bed at a time when the mind is afflicted by two contending passions, which urge to action. Words cannot give an idea of the gloomy despair, which the knowledge of my helpless love brought with it.

I had many books of different characters sent into my room that I might seek diversion in them, but unable to fix my attention upon any, I tossed them away, and plunged into meditations of the following character :—" Now let us examine the position in which my wicked heart has placed me.—An intimate friend introduces me into a quiet and honorable family. and as a sacred trust he recommends me to take care of them. This family receive me kindly, treat me like a brother, overwhelm me with demonstrations of affection. A beautiful, tender, gentle, guileless, and confiding girl, with the purity of an angel, gives me her esteem.—And I ?—I fall desperately in love with the angel who should have rather inspired me with reverence !—what will her parents, Ettore, the world say of me ?—this man has meanly violated friendship, outraged hospitality. sullied his honor !—The ambition of allying himself to the nobility, and the covetousness inspired by a rich dowry, have caused him to ensnare the heart of an unexperienced maiden. —Yes, those who do not possess purely honorable minds think that personal or selfish considerations can ever outweigh the suggestions of honor.—I must stop this—I must retire—even by crushing my heart, and, if she by chance loves me with the



same intensity that I love her?—pshaw! nonsense!—but let us admit, only for argument that she loves me—In this case, other people would call me foolish, cruel, fanatic. They will say: they loved each other, he could make her happy, who knows what kind of man will be allotted to her—well, this is what happens every day in human life: Homer in the *Odyssey* places Hercules in hell, and Seneca in his tragedies, sends him to heaven—but let people say what they like so that my conscience has nothing to reproach me with—If I could make her really happy? . . . why not? . . . Oh! I shall love her forever, foresee her thoughts, anticipate her wishes, please her in everything—but this is not sufficient—she is of old noble lineage: her friends are of the most aristocratic families, and surely they would disinherit her—and she after a time repent her choice.—Besides, I am almost double her age—this is nothing, I am young—but twenty years from this I shall be an old man, and she in the prime of life.—We change character every ten years. The young man of twenty spurns the toys of the age of ten. When he is thirty, his enjoyments and pastimes are different from those before, and so on. In this manner what we like at one age we dislike at another, and *vice versa*—Husband and wife with a remarkable difference of age, for this very reason can never agree.—Well, I can sacrifice my pleasures to her happiness—Can she be happy, in perceiving that? No, she cannot! I cannot make her completely happy. I must crush this rebellious heart. I must not look at that face any more, that sweet face!—It is fortunate that I have put in requisition all my manly strength, so that she never could suspect in the least, what passes in this bosom—”

The course of my life in the few days of my confinement, passed thus in thinking, reflecting, dreaming, and making resolutions, and annulling them in the same moment, but always concluding to sacrifice myself for her happiness.



I was in one of these trains of thought on the second day, when my mother came into my room saying :

“ Oh, what a bad world, my dear Alfio !”

“ What is the matter, mother,” I asked, with anxiety.

“ Nothing positive,” she answered, sitting beside me and arranging my pillows, “ one of our neighbors has been here, weeping so as to sadden my heart. Poor mother ! she has a son, a good tailor, who, I do not know for what cause, is on bad terms with some policeman, and is often arrested and kept for months in prison without any reason. Lately, when he was released the chief of police told him, that to be let alone he must go live in some respectable family, who would be responsible for his conduct. And his poor mother was so afflicted !”

I saw a tear in her benevolent eyes, and taking her hand into mine I said :

“ Well, mamma, why do you torture your heart so ? We can not do anything to soothe her grief.”

“ Yes, we can,” uttered she, timidly.

“ How ? Explain yourself.”

“ If you would,” she said, with a faltering tone of voice, “ take him in here, he would be of great service to us. He could make all your apparel and your brother’s, and besides serve us as a lackey. Do not say no, my dear son. His mother assures me that he is a good boy, and that he has been more sinned against than sinning. I am a mother, dear son, and can sympathize with the grievances of mothers.”

This reminded me, how much she had suffered for my youthful escapades, so I said :

“ Well, mother, I will reflect upon it.”

“ But,” she interposed, with more courage, “ if they see him to-night in the streets, they arrest him again.”

At this moment, baron Micali was announced. My mother



arose, and with an appealing look, she asked me, in haste :  
“ shall I admit the lad ? he is in the hall.”

“ Yes, mamma, but for eight days’ trial.”

Baron Micali entered my room, carrying a large boquet in his hand. With an aspect of deep interest he stopped before my couch, and looking at me anxiously asked :

“ How do you feel now ?”

“ Thank you, I am getting along fairly. Who told you I was ill ?”

“ The blacksmith,” answered he, quickly. “ He came yesterday, to shoe one of my horses, and related your frightful adventure. My wife and my child are in great anxiety, and I promised to return to them quickly, and relate to them the state of affairs. This comes from your pupil. She plucked the best flowers and tied them herself, and recommended me to place them in your room, in a vase, with water. Look, there are many rosebuds not yet opened.”

There was a species of magic in the name Adelina. My heart leaped, my frame thrilled, her sweet and graceful face was before my eyes, the sound of her nightingale voice was in my ears, and I felt as if I were in a region of unclouded happiness. Still I smothered my emotions, and with seeming calmness I thanked him for his trouble, and begged him to give my respects to the baroness and my thanks to his daughter. Then I touched a small silver bell, and on the servant entering I ordered her to put the flowers carefully in a vase with water, in another room.

“ Look here,” interposed the baron, with a chuckle ; “ the orders from high quarters are to place them in this room.”

“ You will excuse my rudeness,” I answered, smiling, “ but the odor is too powerful to be allowed in a chamber.”

As the news of my accident had spread rapidly, many friends came, one after another, to see me ; which was a great relief, as it partly distracted my mind from the subject which tortured me.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### A PRISONER'S STORY.

THE following day passed unhappily, for, with the exception of the clerk of the chancellory, who came every afternoon, to give me an account of the business transacted in my office, no visitor had called to divert my mind from its afflicting thoughts.

When evening came and the candles were lighted I asked my sister to let Pietro come in. Pietro was the name of the new valet. I wished to have him talk, in order to draw him out, if possible, and to amuse myself, thus killing two birds with one stone in the lonely hours of evening.

Pietro was a handsome, well proportioned man of four and thirty. He entered the room, cap in hand, and stopped before me with a bow.

"Sit down," said I pointing to a chair. "I have taken a great responsibility on myself, in receiving you into my house. You will remain here only on one condition; that of never going out in the evening, except when you accompany me."

"I know, sir, the value of the favor you are doing me," he answered, submissively; "may the Madonna reward you, sir, for the good you are doing to my unhappy mother. I hope, sir, that your heart will be rewarded also, by the pleasure of seeing my reformation."

I shall mark the rest of this conversation with the initials Q. and A.

Q. "Now tell me, Pietro, how it happened that you took



the wrong way, for, it seems to me, that you are not bad at heart."

A. (With frankness.) " Misfortunes of human life, sir, contingencies that we cannot avoid."

Q. " Now tell me something about it, candidly."

A. " A few years ago, I formed the habit, after having worked hard the whole day, of going to have a little sport at a tavern in the evenings. There I made the acquaintance of a clique of jolly fellows, who passed the time pleasantly, in talking and playing cards."

Q. " And you began to gamble ?"

A. " There was no harm in it, sir, because a police officer formed part of the clique, and he played too, sometimes."

Q. " Did you ever win ?"

A. " I was unskilful then, and they fleeced me. Finally I perceived the trick, and angry at having been duped, I made up my mind to dupe others."

Q. " And so you sought the promotion from dupe to rogue—a noble ambition !"

A. " Still I could not succeed in my plan."

Q. " I am glad of it—why ?"

A. " Because I did not belong to the fraternity of men of honor."

Q. " This is a contradiction, Pietro ! A rogue is the reverse of an honest man ! Explain yourself better."

A. " A man of honor, in their sense, is he who does not tell tales, viz : if he has witnessed, or has knowledge of any crime, he must never tell it to the judge ; and if he endures imprisonment for it, his name becomes celebrated, amongst the fraternity in general, and he becomes a chief. It is a great relief, sir, to be a chief, when a man is in prison !"

Q. " What is it you mean ?"

A. " Nothing less than money and respect. The chief does



not gamble, but oversees the players, to keep order, and takes the *fava*—horse bean."

Q. "What is that?"

A. "Don't you know what the *fava* is? Well, it is a percentage on those who win. Sometimes, when luck is fickle, he is the only winner over all. The chief has a share in all hits, without compromising himself. When a chief is imprisoned, his companions give a banquet for his reception."

Q. "This is an abomination! And you call by the name of honor, what is sheer dishonor?"

A. "Why, sir! You puzzle me! The thing is not so bad as you think, since all the police officers are chiefs. Certainly, if it were an abominable thing, those who are paid to keep order, would not belong to the party."

Q. "And you have been a chief?"

A. "Yes, sir, but I had to fight for it."

Q. "Fight, you said?"

A. "Yes, sir; once there was a murder committed in a tavern. I was present. The infamous tavern keeper began to scream—murder—with all the power of his lungs. He looked like a man possessed. A *sbirro*, officer of police, was with us and stole away. Unhappily, a police patrol was passing by in the nick of time. It was early in the evening, and a crowd barred our exit. The patrol—poor fellows—could not help coming in and arresting all of us. To make a long story short, we suffered six months' imprisonment, and lashes every day, but the criminal court could never find out the murderer."

Q.—"And the tavern keeper?"

A.—"He was in prison too, but he did not see who killed the man. He is so infamous that if he knew it, he would have peached."

Q.—"And you call infamous a man who had honest principles?"

A.—"Why, sir! I shudder at the thought! Is there greater infamy than to peach? Better be dead, Sir! better dead!"



Q.—“ In this manner the high officers of police, through the villany of the *sbirri* never know of the crimes committed !”

A. (a coarse laugh.)—“ The prefect, the commissiari, and the inspectors of police, know everything, but they must pretend not to know anything, because they are in the same trade, although they deal in different goods.”

Q.—“ Explain yourself, this is impossible.”

A.—“ Impossible, you said ! May Saint Vito choke me, if I do not tell you the truth, Sir ! They deal with pick-pockets, and with the high speculators who break open churches and rich convents. The pick-pockets sell every day the watches and silk handkerchiefs for a trifle. Every two or three months they are all put in prison for a few days. There each one is forced to inform the inspector of police of all the persons to whom the stolen property has been sold. Then there commences a hunting after the purchasers of stolen property. The sharper of an inspector of police calls at your house and tells you that the police are informed of your having bought a stolen watch, giving the most minute details of it. You are frightened because the offence is punished with imprisonment and a fine. In order that the affair may remain unknown, you give the officer the watch, and hush money. Every thing being collected, they make a dividend of the hush money, and send the property to be sold in distant places.”

Q.—“ Impossible ! People after escaping punishment would naturally trust the secret to some friends. The cases being so numerous they cannot fail from mouth to mouth, to reach the ears of those robbed, and they would go to reclaim their property.”

A.—“ Ah ! ah ! ah ! They are not green, Sir, I tell you. As soon as they have collected the objects, they stick a notice at the gate of the palace of the police, saying that stolen goods may be found there, and inviting the proprietors to come and give the details of their stolen property. People go and find there an old stock of good-for-nothing silk handkerchiefs, kept



there for the purpose. If they ask for watches and chains, they are answered that they had some, which the legitimate proprietors had already reclaimed."

Q.—"You were going to tell me how you became a chief, and then you went astray with your tongue."

A.—"You are right, Sir. When I went to prison through the fault of that infamous tavern keeper, there were fifty prisoners in the room to which I was assigned. They were of every class of society. Amongst them there were four chiefs and a head chief. Like a newly caged bird I began to pace the room to and fro, looking askance at every one. It was my first imprisonment, and I was not acquainted with any of them."

Q.—"Fifty in one room!"

A.—"Yes, Sir, and what big bits of Patriarchs\* there were amongst them! Whilst I was walking, a fellow, who wore the face of a galley convict accosted me, made a polite bow, and began to step beside me. At first he began to speak of the weather; but perceiving that I was not in a talking humor, he broached the subject of the uses and regulations of the prison. On reaching the centre of the room, he pointed with his finger on high—do you see that—he said,—I see it, I replied—and what do you call it, he asked.—I call it a lamp, I answered, hanging by a chain to the high roof.—But do you know what lamp means, says he.—A contrivance says I, to give us light in the night.—You are in error, says he, with a genteel manner, lamp is a fee that every new comer is obliged to pay to the board of chiefs, at his entrance into this institution. And how much is it? I asked with surprise—That depends, he answered, upon the means and the position of the man. It may be one dollar, it may be one hundred. The board in their wisdom have thought one dollar enough for you.

"I felt very angry, Sir, for I thought I was getting imposed

\* A common saying, meaning—great rogues.



upon, and in a fierce manner I exclaimed—suppose I wont pay.—Your bread, said he, and your soup, will pay for it, unless you will fight for your toll; in that case, if you are wounded you are acquitted of the payment. If you conquer,—which is difficult—you acquire the right of being admitted into the co-partnership of the chiefs.—I liked the alternative, and fearlessly exclaimed—fight is the word. But hold on: I am alone here, shall I have fair play?—Fair play on honor—he answered.

“I was sure that he would have rather foresworn all the saints of the almanac, than his honor. Chance would have that I conquered and became a chief.”

Q.—“Did you see any one who could not pay this imposition?”

A.—“Yes, sir, several. Oh, poor people! When I think of one I shudder! He was a poor shoemaker. He was arrested under some pretext, but in reality because he dunned an inspector of police to pay him for boots and shoes he had made for him. He could not pay the lamp, and the head chief condemned him to forfeit his bread for eight days. He was starving, and a dreadful fear of being beaten kept him silent. My heart could not endure the sight of such cruelties, and *di nascosto* secretly I gave him part of the double share, allotted to me as a chief.

“I must confess, that I had no mercy for those who gambled their bread.”

Q.—“But why did not the shoemaker appeal to the superintendent of the prisons or some other officer?”

A.—“That can't be done, sir, since the head chief is recognised by the police as such, with the understanding that he must be responsible for the tranquility of his department, and the police, on their part, must not interfere with his internal management. In this manner he is an absolute tyrant.”



Q.—“ Now tell me how did you employ those long days of imprisonment.”

A.—“ My mouth is very dry, sir, permit me to drink some water.”

“ No,” I replied, “ take a glass of wine from that bottle.” He took the bottle, filled the tumbler to the brim, and went through their ceremonial of polite drinking, viz :

Holding the tumbler in the right hand raised to the height of the chin, the thumb of the left hooked on the side aperture of the vest, spat on the floor, saying, your health, sir—and then with a slight nod of the head, drinking the whole contents at a single draught, and finishing by turning the glass upside down, causing the last drop to fall on the floor, and finally bowing, with a smack of the lips. This ceremonial performed, he resumed :

“ Except every other day when I was called in the morning to the private rooms of the police, my time passed very pleasantly, and I learned things worth learning.”

Q.—“ Why were you called by the police ?”

A.—“ Why, sir, to be flogged, in order to confess. I assure you that when I heard my name hallooed, I felt the chills and fever ; although my room-mates petted and nursed me the whole day.

“ We all slept on the stone floor of the hall. The majority of us were provided with a kind of pillow, as long as our own persons, which we used as a mattress. The poorest had not such a luxury and lay on the naked floor. In times of great concourse, we were so thickly arranged, that one's shoulders touched those of his neighbors, and feet touched heads. It was a floor paved with living creatures.

“ In the morning we cleared the floor of the pillows, and then performed a soldier-like promenade ; to stretch and put in motion our limbs, benumbed by the night's accommodations. Placed two, or three, or four abreast more or less according to



the number of the inmates, and in regular file we strode up and down the hall, smoking, shouting, singing, swearing.

“After this, the iron door opened, an Inspector of police entered, accompanied by soldiers, and from a strip of paper called several names. The individuals who answered those names, in the twinkling of an eye, were adorned with a pair of iron bracelets, and went to their destinations—some to the Court for trial, some to the gallies, some to be flogged, and occasionally some to the castle chapel, to make their last confession and communion—poor souls!

“In the forenoon, they brought in large baskets filled with loaves of black bread, and long boards covered with tin sauce-pans, containing porridge-soup.

“These things were consigned to the chief of the hall. Oh, sir! you never saw so many hungry men, looking with anxious faces and starting eyes at that loathsome smoking dish!

“The head chief, with a stentorian voice called to order All the men drew themselves alongside the walls, and the board of chiefs gathered in a corner for consultation.

“Their first business was, to put aside the loaves and soup of those who had lost them in gambling the preceding day, and of those who had forfeited them for the lamp-tax. Then they distributed the meal.

“Here commenced a scene Some squatted on the floor, devouring their meal like famished wolves; some gamboling with the pot in one hand and the loaf in the other; some laughing, some singing, some screaming, some disputing with wild glee, and those who had forfeited the meal cursing with wild despair.

“This scene over, the gambling commenced, which lasted till sunset”

Q “How did you pass the evenings?”

A “Oh, the evenings! It was in the evenings that I learned all that I know. You may believe, sir, that desperate



people who have nothing to do, and who dread the time of lying down for its comfortlessness, must pass very unpleasant evenings—nothing of the kind, sir. We devoted our evenings to amusements, public instruction, and judicial affairs."

Q. "Gambling, of course?"

A. "No, sir. There was an old chap who knew many a story, and when there was no important business on hand, he told us the stories of the Paladins of France, Rinaldo, Roland, Fieravante, Ruggero, etc. This old fellow told his stories so pleasantly, and took so much interest in the feats of his warriors, that he made us imagine we were present and participated in their deeds of prowess. If you saw, sir, all heads erect, and faces radiant! For one, I can assure you, when I heard some touching facts of bravery, of mercy, and of noble achievements, I forgot myself, and felt that I could vie with that hero."

Q. "I think that your best occupation must have been what you call public instruction. How did you manage that?"

A. (Wavering of the head with knitted brows.) "No, sir, you quite misunderstand the meaning of the words."

Q. "How so? Explain yourself."

A. "Well, sir, I am afraid that your wine has made me too talkative, and that you will get tired with the description of matters which must needs be unpleasant to your ear."

Q. "On the contrary, I like to be informed of these things."

A. (A smack of the lips.) "My mouth is so dry!" (A wry face.)

Q. "Take a little more wine—hold! Give me the bottle." (I poured one-half a glass.) "This wine is too strong, and I am afraid it might hurt you."

A. (An imperceptible curl of the lip.) "Never fear, sir, I am a barrel." (Performance of the ceremony of drinking.) "You know, sir, that bandits, highwaymen, burglars, forgers,



and pick-pockets, are locked up in the same halls. Many a genteel young man, or honest mechanic, who has the misfortune to engage in a quarrel, or the lack of policy not to bow, hat in hand, to a police-inspector who approaches him, is conveyed to prison—the police-officers are very strict with them—and they are locked in the same rooms with malefactors. After making them pay a heavy lamp-tax, then begin the exhortations from all sides. In the evening there is the lecture, which shows the advantages of being on good terms with the police-officers, and of leading a jolly life. And there commences a narration of thefts, gallant schemes, glorious successes, disappointments of the police, cunning means used not to be discovered, self-esteem satisfied, renown among the fraternity, etc. All those things are related by the heroes themselves, enriched with characteristic and amusing anecdotes, and enhanced by such fluency and inviting self-satisfaction, that one begins by being amused; then insensibly he loses the repugnancy of an honest man for such deeds, and, in the course of time, feels a desire to join in such enterprises. Those who have the misfortune to be forgotten in the prison, can't help turning bad. So it was with me! Staying many months in prison, I lost my character and could not find employment. Wandering in idleness, I met with my fellow-prisoners, and so on, on, on"—

Q. "There is something I cannot believe in your tale, and it is this:

"How is it possible that those hardened criminals should trust the tale of their crimes to the ears of new comers, who being strangers and honest men, could, the next day, turn witnesses against them?"

A. (A laugh.) "Those who tell their tales are out of the reach of any harm.

"They are those who have been tried and sentenced, some to death, some to prisons, and some to exile. They relate the facts for which they have been convicted. But those con-



demned to death, relate the history of their lives because a capital sentence puts the man out of the reach of other condemnations ; but they never mention the names of their pals."

Q. " Now tell me something about your judicial affairs. But make haste, because I begin to be tired."

A. " When a man comes into a department—we call by this name the different halls—indicted for murder or theft, all the chiefs go to him, and ask privately the confession of the fact with all its minutest particulars. In the evening they enact a formal trial.

" During the whole time I was in prison, I witnessed only two trials, one for murder and one for theft."

Q. " Who conducts the trial ?"

A. " The prisoners perform the part of Attorney General, President, Judges, Chancellor, Lawyers and witnesses."

Q. " How do they manage ?"

A. " These chaps have so many times been tried and condemned, and so many times seen trials of others, that they know the laws, and every kind of devices and tricks better than lawyers and judges.

" The chief who at that time acted as President was an old man of *Humility*, but very learned, indeed !"

Q. " What do you mean by saying, a man of Humility, with such an emphasis ?"

A. " Why, sir ! The man of humility is in the first rank among the men of honor ! It is a real glory ! There is no theft in it ! He is a man who expiates willingly the crime of another.

" This man, of whom I am speaking, once was present at a brawl, without being a participator. A man was killed, and the murderer slipped away unperceived. This man tried to raise up the fallen man. But he was stark dead. What was an unusual thing for the police, they were at hand and arrested him, with stains of blood on his hands. He could have related



the fact and got out of the scrape. But no! He was condemned to twenty years, and suffered innocently instead of another pal, and all out of Humility.

Q. "You have a queer sort of dictionary. You call honor what is dishonor, and humility a brute sense of loyalty. And then after twenty years of penalty he began again the life of a criminal?"

A. "Not quite twenty, sir. You know better. You belong to the Court, sir! You know very well that at every birth of a royal prince, there is a grace of two years, only for those poor souls who are condemned for theft or murder. And our sacred queen has a new one every twelve months. She is a good queen for the poor prisoners.

"Thus our man only suffered seven years of punishment out of twenty. But those were years of pleasure for him. In consideration of behavior he had the honor of chieftainship bestowed from all places, and money sent to him in abundance from all quarters."

Q. "That will do for your man of Humility. Finish by telling me about the mock trial."

A. "Well, sir, he who performed the part of Attorney General put the indictment in the worst shape, setting in view the most minute circumstances, to aggravate the crime. Witnesses were examined—the lawyers made the defence, and the court decided."

Q. "How?"

A. "I am speaking of two trials. Well, sir, in that for murder the accused was acquitted, and in that for theft condemned. Thus resulted the true courts. I tell you, sir, those chaps know more about laws than lawyers themselves.

"The warning they give to the prisoners in all cases, besides the good counsels how to elude the law is—*always deny, never plead guilty.*"

Q. "But how is it that those police officers who take a share



of the net produce of crimes, use so many cruelties against the very people whom they have fostered and nursed in the way of dissipation and demoralization ?”

A. “The reason is very plain. In all transactions they take the share of the lion, whilst they risk nothing. This imposition is endured for some time, till, at last, natural pride revolts, and fighting ensues.

“A man who is at enmity with the police, works on his own hook, and then he is lost.”

“Well, you may retire now,” said I.

“Do you want anything, sir, for the night ?”

“No,” I replied, “only trim well the lamp, and see that all the apertures of the house are secured.”

Pietro bowed, and retired slowly.

I looked at the retreating form with pity. I felt sick at heart for the narration I had heard

“Poor people,” I soliloquised, “naturally generous, humane, brave ; to be trained on purpose to destruction ! But this one, at least, I hope to redeem.”



## CHAPTER XIV.

### CHRISTENING PARTY.

THE next morning my mother having enquired after my health, asked me what I thought of Pietro.

"My dear mother," I answered, "I think it a very hard case. He is one of those poor wretches, who through ignorance are festered and nursed into demoralization and crime, to be afterwards held up to shame and public contempt, when they become culpable. This man, as far as I could conclude from his words, has not been a thief, nor has he any disposition for it, but he is in league with public offenders. Fearing that it will be impossible to reclaim him, I do not wish to have him in my house."

"I have just given him a lecture," replied my mother. "He told me that he was dragged to that life, that he yearns to belong again to the class of honest men, and that he will repudiate all his friends. To convince me of his firm resolution to reform, he spoke to me of the sincere relation and disclosures he made you last night. Try him, my son ; who knows but that you can lead him to the good path again ?"

"Amen," I muttered, "so may God help me."

Eight days after my accident, I was able to ride in a carriage. I deemed it my first duty to call at Micali's. I had time enough to school my heart to firmness. The best method to cure myself would have been a firm resolution, of absenting myself entirely from there. But this self sacrifice I could not perform without offending the laws of civility and good breeding. Thus my mind was made up to see them as usual and



look at Adelina as a sister. As the carriage arrived at their portico all the family came out to help me alight. The expressions of pleasure were boundless. Miss Adelina did not utter a word. She gazed at me with tender and wistful eyes, and took my hand in hers, which was as cold as ice. I felt my emotions rising, but I battled so as to conquer them, for the moment.

As a matter of course our conversation related to the mad-dog. In describing the adventure, I could perceive by the violent heaving of the young lady's bosom, the effect of my story upon her natural sensibility. When I spoke of my lonesome hours of confinement, she exclaimed, with an assumed frown :

"I am angry at you, Mr. Balzani. You did not design to have my poor bouquet in your room, and you exiled it to another part of the house !"

I delighted often in quizzing her, in order to contemplate the indescribable radiance and interest, which that angelic face acquired when puzzled. This now was not consentaneous to my determinations, but I could not overcome the present temptation, and asked :

"Are you a Sybarite !"

"I do not understand you," she said, slowly, with that beautiful puzzle twinkling in her eyes.

"You know," I replied, "the Sybarites or Lucani, were an ancient people of Italy, powerful, rich and luxurious. Their luxury entered even into the execution of criminals. When a man was condemned to die, they locked him into a room where the air could not be renewed, and placed there a large quantity of fresh roses, whose perfume poisoned the man in a few hours."

She looked at me anxiously and wistfully, but when she perceived the trick, she exclaimed with a look intended to denote offended pride, but which, instead, enhanced her loveliness :  
"Fie, Mr. Balzani, fie," I looked at her as in a trance. Those



pure, heavenly kind eyes lifted upon me, gave the lie to the word intended for rebuke. Oh, how I would have thrown myself at her feet. I tried to overcome my feelings, but in vain ; finally with a pretended laugh I arose and went into the garden. A second more and I might expose myself, not being able to wear a calm exterior any longer. Fortunately none of them ever had occasion to notice the fire burning within me.

Towards dusk the baron apprised me that his carriage was at the door, ready for me when I wished to go. I took leave of the ladies, promising to return there soon, and accompanied by Mr. Micali I started for home.

On arriving at the gate *Porta dei Greci*, feeling oppressed inside of a close carriage, and wishing to be alone, to give way to my emotions, I begged of the baron to leave me there, giving as a reason, that I wished to have a little exercise, since I had not walked for eight days.. Thus left alone, or rather, in company only with my-afflicted thoughts, panting and sighing I walked slowly homeward. Slowly I crossed the Kalsa, a ward inhabited almost exclusively by fishermen.

The convent of Gargia marks the limit of the ward. It belongs to the order of Saint Francis. By their rules, the monks are mendicants. They are all liberals, and have taken an active part in all the struggles for freedom. In fact, we have had in this country, for several years, a father of that order—a very learned man—who was exiled, with several others of his fraternity, after suffering in dungeons and on the rack. The attempt at revolution made in the beginning of the present year, had its birth in that convent, and caused its destruction.

On reaching the door of the church, my attention was attracted by a monk, who was ringing a small hand bell, and calling on the passers by to enter for the Benediction.

In the state of morbid feelings which tortured my heart this appeared to me a call, and I entered the church to ask help from him who never forsakes when appealed to.



The half of the church, near the main altar, was full of women, belonging to the fishermen's families. I knelt before the railings of the altar, and began to pour out my heart-felt prayers.

A little while after, the organ commenced playing, and the congregation began to sing the *tantum ergo*. One of the faults of the Roman Catholic church is, its use of the Latin language, in all its prayers and offices. People are taught to repeat them like parrots. They say them, supposing that they pray, but they do not know what they say. Instinctively they give to the Latin words an Italian turn, fashioning them into such as suit their fancy for the occasion. The meaning of these made up words is, very often, so comical, when compared with the original Latin, and the circumstance in which they are pronounced, that the intelligent man cannot help laughing, even in the course of the most serious and affecting ceremony.

Thus it was with me. When the hymn arrived at the words—*et anticum documentum, novo cedat ritui*—a woman kneeling beside me, and who led the singing said, instead of the above Latin words—*e ch' e anticu stu conventu, nove cento e tre*—which literally means, "Oh, how old is this convent—nine hundred and three."

This was a thing so unheard of, that it excited my fancy and raised my mirth, that I forgot my sorrow and the holiness of the place where I was, and to the great scandal of the entire congregation, (fortunately there were no men there,) I laughed aloud, and ran for the door.

I was very sorry indeed for such a puerility, but it was something I could not avoid. Two extremes are said to touch each other, perhaps my frame of mind being, at that particular moment, weighed down with grief, only required a comic and unexpected circumstance to call forth the opposite feeling of mirth.

When I reached home I found a note from my friend Giu-



seppe, in which he communicated to me the news of a son being born to him ; and invited me to bring my mother to his house, to assist at the christening of the child.

At nine o'clock we arrived there. The elegantly furnished house was fully illumined by wax tapers. The bed-room furniture was exquisite. The bedstead was of German silver. Four large columns of fluted metal formed its corners, surmounted with gilt pomegranate. The back and the front, of the same material, represented snakes and serpents, with gilt heads and tails, and so combined as to make a beautiful design. The counterpane and pillows were of blue satin, covered with lace, and trimmed with the finest of *point d'applique*. The curtains were also of lace.

The heat in the room was intense, and poor Mrs. Nobile was gasping for breath in her bed. The ceremony of baptism performed, the guests went into other rooms, to pass the evening in dancing and playing ; and finished with a splendid supper.

In going out, we saw Mr. de Tourville on the stairs, who, with his usual gallantry and polite manners, offered to take us home in the cab which was waiting for him at the door. The amiability and conversational powers of this young gentleman were very great. He always had pleasant topics or anecdotes to make one pass the time cheerfully.

On this occasion he addressed my mother, saying :

“ Oh, madam, I saw a very curious scene this afternoon. I was on my way to the hotel Triancria, when I had to take refuge in the entry of a house, to avoid collision with a throng which came boisterously sweeping by. A large crowd of dirty urchins, jumping and gamboling, obstructed the street from one side to the other. Four men followed walking in couples, each carrying on his shoulder the end of a wooden bar, from the centre of which hung a rope doubled. To this was tied, head and tail, an immensely large fish, with boquets of flowers stuck in its eyes and various parts of its body.



The men had handkerchiefs tied round their heads. By their red and flushed faces and the tensity of their muscles, I could judge of the enormous weight they carried. This novelty became more surprising to me by the sight of a succession of twelve more such fishes in the same style."

"This is the *tonno*," answered my mother, "this fish is taken once a year, and this is their season. They catch an immense number of them, and there is no class of people who do not eat of it. It is very savory, and so cheap that it makes the feast of the poor. This unfortunate class live only on *tonno*, this month, and that is the reason why they make it a festival."

"This abundance has sharpened the culinary skill of our cooks, who season the *tonno* in many agreeable ways. Besides it gives commercial resources. Salted, pickled, and dried, it is sent all over the world."

"Can it be of commercial value?" asked Mr. de Tourville, who had listened with interest to the relation made by my mother.

"Yes," she answered with enthusiasm, because she was enthusiastic in almost everything that belonged to her country, "Yes, sir, those who deal in *tonno* are rich. The ancestors of the duke of Monteleone, Aragona, Pignatelli, Cortes, one of the most rich and powerful of our nobility, were nothing but dealers in *tonno*, who lent some millions to the Emperor Charles Fifth in time of distress. Through this loan, and their talent and prowess, they became very mighty."

By this time the cab had stopped at our door, and we retired for the night.



## CHAPTER XV.

### SAINT PIETRO.

THE celebration of religious festivals is accompanied in Sicily with social and material enjoyments. It must be borne in mind, that the festivals occur almost every day. They are of three degrees—according, as the several saints are very rich, in moderate circumstances, or poor.

Every church has a colossal statue of its patron saint, made either of wood or silver, which has a number of female votaries, more or less numerous according to the degree of the saint.

The festivals of those of the first class are celebrated with long processions, in which the statues of many other saints are carried with their respective accompaniment of bands of music, priests, friars, congregations, bearing lighted wax-tapers in their hands, and a throng of women. Work is forbidden on those days.

The saints of the second class have a procession also, but without the pageant of other saints.

Saints of the third class do not go out of doors, and content themselves with a solemnity at home. All close with a display of fireworks, great or little according to circumstances, or with *masky* for the poor ones ; and conclude with feasting.

The square of the church which solemnizes its saint is seen in the morning filled with tents, pitched in rows or in a circle, with tables within covered with fruits, sugar-plums and honey-cakes, shaped to represent the effigy of the saint.

In the evening there is a crowd, more or less dense according to the degree of the solemnity.



The festival of Saint Peter, although belonging to the second degree, is very popular. On this occasion the saint is represented by keys made of sugar, almonds, pistachio, honey-cake, and of every dimension, from three inches to two yards in length, which are to be found in the morning, hanging in all confectionery stores, and in many booths improvised for the occasion. Numerous venders in the streets awake the late risers with the peculiar tune adopted for Saint Peter's keys. Servants are seen at every point, carrying with great care, trays of keys adorned with ribbons and flowers—presents that betrothed lovers have to send to their lady loves. In a word, it is a day of liveliness and of brisk traffic for the trade.

It would be a difficult task to describe the different emotions that swept in rapid succession through my breast that morning. It was for our family a day of mourning, because it was the festival of the saint after whom my father was named. It reminded us vividly of the joy of by-gone days. On this occasion all relatives and intimate friends were used to be invited to a sumptuous dinner at our house; at the end of which the party passed into another room, adorned with garlands and flowers, and numerous keys hanging with labels attached bearing the names of each one, young and old. In the evening there was a ball—the only one given by us throughout the year. The outside bustle had once served to enhance the internal joy of our house; now how many sad and gloomy thoughts it re-awakened in my heart! The anniversary of the death of my sainted wife, now at hand, also recalled to my bosom its pangs and sorrows. Then, the sweet and innocent face of Adelina presented itself to my memory as a soothing angel to my desolate heart. This time I did not mope at the recollection; I welcomed it for the relief it afforded to my sorrow. Such is human nature; to make ourselves strong to endure misfortune, we instinctively indulge in false hopes. I thought, at that moment, I was nearly cured from that unrea-



sonable passion. So I determined to go and dine with Micali's family—an invitation that had been many times proffered to me, and never accepted. But in avoiding Scylla I fell into Charybdis. When I was away from her I thought myself nearly cured ; but now, scarcely was I in her presence, before her looks gave an electric thrill to my heart, and a momentary tremor ran through my system. Still I mastered my feelings, and, with an assumed gaiety, I said to her :

“ I feel very gloomy to-day, and I came here to get a ray of sunshine.”

The day passed merrily, or I should rather say, I affected merriment the whole day. Towards dusk I returned home, where I fell into a gloomier state than in the morning.

Mr. de Tourville and my friends Antonio, Giuseppe, and Onofrio, had been there looking for me, and went away disappointed.

Night had just fairly set in, and I was walking slowly up and down the floor of my room, with my head bent and my arms crossed on my chest, when Pietro entered, asking me if I wanted a light. “ No,” I answered in a sulky tone ; and he retreated.

This occurrence partially broke the train of my thoughts. The time he had already been in my house, had not only showed him a model of propriety, but to all my suggestions and hints on morals and rectitude, he had listened with such earnestness as to convince me of his great desire for reformation.

A quarter of an hour elapsed, and he came in again.

“ What now ?” I asked.

“ Did you not call, sir ?”

“ No.”

“ I thought you did, sir ; I beg your pardon.”

Seeing that he did not stir, I asked :

“ Do you want anything ?”



"No, sir," he answered, hesitatingly, "I was thinking what a beautiful night this is."

"Yes," I answered curtly, "it is calm and starry."

"This is nothing," he continued, a little more animated. "You know it is Saint Peter's night," and in saying so he smacked his lips.

I recollected that the man before me had been used for a long time to evening revelries, and now after so much restraint must feel an earnest longing to share in the enjoyment of the night in which most people might lawfully participate. That having assumed the work of reforming this man, to deprive him of the innocent pleasures that the solemnity afforded even to the good and honest, would be to pull the string too hard, and make him feel the task of amendment insupportable. Thus partly from sympathy, and partly from policy I resolved on my line of conduct.

"Well, Pietro," I said, "give me my hat and cane, and take a bottle of Syracuse with you."

These words were magical, Pietro spun himself round on his heel, and in the twinkling of an eye handed me the required articles.

The Church of Saint Peter was at that time situated in the middle of a large square at the extremity of the northern part of the city, near the coast. On the east side there is Castellamare. This is a castle built by the Saracens and improved and made stronger by the Normans. It lies on a tongue of land in the sea, leaving a small bay on its right.

On the north and west sides of the square there are buildings divided by the entrances of several streets. On the south side, where were once the walls of the city, there is now a row of houses and a gate called *Porta Piedi Grotta*, which gives exit to a circular beach, around a basin of the sea or small bay where vessels unload their goods.

This church does not now exist. The munificent king Fer-



dinand Second, called per antonomasia *Bomba*, a few years after the epoch I am relating, considering the church an obstruction to the cannons of the fortress pouring his paternal blessings on the city in the form of iron grapes, had it razed to the ground, together with the palace of the marquis Cordova, which was also in his way.

On arriving at the square we found it thronged with a motley crowd. A stunning noise caused by the chiming of sellers of fruits, confectionery, and cakes, who had pitched their tents in the form of a military encampment, filled the air. As the door of the church closed, a sky rocket gave the signal for the commencement of the fire works ; the screams of venders stopped at once, and the buzzing of the multitude gradually dwindled into perfect silence.

The performance lasted twenty minutes, and finished as usual with a loud explosion.

The venders who had rested their lungs, began to cry more loudly, in a discordant concert, which was rendered exceedingly boisterous by the voices of men, women, and children, calling one another to gather in order to march to the beach.

"Let us stop here for half an hour," said Pietro, "for it is very uncomfortable to pass the gate in this crowd."

In fact a compact mass of living beings could be seen, not walking but dragging itself with a waving movement towards the gate, which could scarcely admit ten men abreast.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### ON THE SEA.

THE circular beach, alluded to in the preceding chapter, is half a mile in length and quite narrow, because of the dwellings, which are built around. Two other gates open on it, and it ends in a road that opens to the Marina, or *foro Borbonico*; so called from the presence of a row of marble statues, representing all the Bourbons, who have reigned in Sicily.

The liveliness that this beach presented to the beholder, did not tell of an oppressed people. Spacious square tents were erected along it, and illuminated with lamps of different colors, suspended so as to form fringes. Conspicuous at the entrance of each was set a large table, groaning with all kinds of culinary luxuries: the most essential for that night being the *tonno*. Boquets of flowers, snow white table cloths, shining candlesticks, forks, and knives, sparkling tumblers, bottles of wine placed in symmetrical order, and the smell of the viands, all combined to excite one's appetite.

Behind each of these show tables, a good number of smaller ones, neatly set, were occupied by mechanics and their families, eating and drinking. Yonder, in more shadowy places, groups of men, women, and children, were seen, with a loaf of bread brought with them, and a few cents' worth of fish and a bottle of wine bought on the spot, feasting merrily—oppression and misery being, for that moment, forgotten.

The cries of the venders, the laughing and talking of the people, the clattering noise of plates, knives, and forks, and a



melodious sound of music far off on the waters, however discordant in themselves, combined, produced a very enlivening effect.

A file of boats, adorned with lamps, were waiting for customers. Whilst Pietro was engaged in buying some tonno and shell-fish, I hailed a boatman, ordered him to put out his lights, and jumped in.

The night was beautiful, the weather fine, the firmament clear, and the dark, transparent water, with that stillness and rest characteristic of eventide, reflected clearly the deep blue sky, brilliantly studded with stars.

I do not feel competent to describe with effect that night of Saint Peter's festival. The heavens presented the most majestic appearance, with its blue canopy, studded with millions of sparkling stars, and the broad bosom of the sea, whilst reflecting the gorgeous panorama of the skies, looked as pleasant and tranquil, as the dream of an innocent maiden.

Rowing out of the small bay to the left, where the castle makes an angle, another scene presented itself to our view.

Nearly three hundred boats were gathered in a group, surrounding six brigs, anchored half a mile from the shore, at a small distance from one another. These vessels, on occasion of this saint's festival, had been fitted up as dancing and dining saloons, and ornamented with flags, and whatever elegance the circumstances and place permitted. Each boat had an awning with lamps of different colors hanging from it.

Myriads of lights of various colors, shone down on the smoothly undulating waters, like stars in the heavens.

All these boats touched one another without striking. No oars were used. A slight push of the hand on the next boat, adroitly given by the waterman, caused our position to change, and placed us insensibly among the crowd of other boats, and with every change the scene varied as in a kaleidoscope.

Here, I had on my right side a family of mechanics, father,



mother, girls and boys, eating with the greatest zest their tonno, drinking, laughing, pointing at other boats, and making loud comments. On the left, was a fat, red-faced priest, busy in breaking chocolate into small pieces, and putting them on the plank, beside several pieces of bread, and a bottle of wine; his veiled niece, now and then extending in silence a delicate white hand, to partake of the delicacy. On the boat in front stood a fiddler, playing and singing a comical ditty, accompanying it with all kinds of contortions of his tall, slim body; now flourishing the bow in the air, and then the violin. Here was a brig, with a band of music, where people of a higher class were dancing and feasting. On, on, we glided, changing position and neighbors at every moment. Here was the playing of a flute, there that of a guitar—here songs, there contentions—here a boat with gay officers in brilliant uniforms, and with an air of careless superiority, which meant, “the world is ours!” There was seen a boat, with lamps extinguished, where a young couple, pressing each other’s hand tightly, were exchanging sweet glances. Here were a pair of corpulent, red-faced individuals, who, although clothed in secular apparel, were easily recognized by their shaven faces, the cut of their hair, and the peculiar rotundity of their persons, as disguised monks.

Here was another brig with music and dancers, who, notwithstanding their belonging to a refined class, did not thus fail to participate somewhat in the gaiety of the occasion.

These thousands of votaries of pleasure, of all classes, celebrated the religious anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Peter, by eating, drinking, dancing, singing, whirling, laughing and jesting.

As the scene was not new to me, it had not the power of diverting me entirely from my own agitating thoughts.

So feeling a kind of ennui amongst the revellers, I ordered



the boatmen to row to the shore, on approaching which I heard a congenial voice hailing me.

Turning to the left, I saw my friend Giuseppe.

"You are coming," I said, "at the fashionable hour, whilst I, as an old man, intend to retire."

"Nonsense!" he replied, merrily; "I am going on board the brig *Trinaeria*, and you must go with me. There you will find a select company and delightful society. You know many of the guests; you will also find there Antonio and Mr. de Tourville."

"No," I replied, gloomily, "I do not feel in humor for society to-night, and, besides, I am not elegantly dressed."

"Bah!" he retorted; "you know very well, that this is not a soiree in full dress—it is rather a religious one, and we go in half-toilet."

Immediately he jumped into my boat, and ordered the man to board the brig. The first person I saw there, was Mr. de Tourville, who hastened to receive me.

The society was chosen indeed, and the most were engaged at a supper *a la fourchette*, at a long table in the centre of the deck. Seeing a lady acquaintance, I approached and offered my services. While attending to her I began to examine all the new physiognomies.

On the other side of the table, just opposite me, was a midshipman waiting on a young lady unknown to me. She was of about medium size, not tall, but perfect in her outlines. Her complexion was brunette, her glossy hair black and rich. She had large, dark eyes, intensely expressive—small pug nose, large forehead, small mouth with voluptuous coral lips. Her figure was erect and stately, and her swan-like neck gave a majestic importance to her handsome head. In the expression of her features there was a peculiar something that fixed them indelibly in the memory. One who looked upon that face could not help feeling fascinated by it. It was not



the fascination which purports love, but that charm which whispers a doom for the man who comes within its influence. I looked at her with concern, thinking how opposite in character was her physiognomy with that of Adelina. In the meanwhile I saw my friend Onofrio coming towards me arm in arm with a gentleman in an undress uniform. On reaching me, Onofrio turned to the officer and said :

“ I have the pleasure to introduce to you my dear friend Alfio Balzani—Captain Muzzarielli of his Majesty’s navy ”

Captain Muzzarielli was a tall, stout man, with noble bearing, not older than five and fifty. His head was large, his hair gray, his forehead expansive, his face round, ruddy and entirely shaven, his nose strait and pointed, his eyes small and grey. His deportment was elegant and soldier like ; his countenance was very amiable and mild, though it betrayed that he could be proud, tyrannical, and inflexible, according to circumstances. He began to speak to me in an agreeable manner. His loquacity had something pleasant and entertaining.

After the approach of this gentleman, the belle—so she was considered—regarding with an air of ennui the attentions of the midshipman, had kept her eyes fixed on our group.

Moved by curiosity, I asked Onofrio who that lady was. Before he had time to answer, the naval officer said, with a dignified bow, “ Your servant, Miss Eleonora, my daughter.” Then turning to Onofrio, in a kindly forcible manner, he continued : “ Let us give my child the pleasure of the acquaintance of Mr. Balzani.”

At our approach she quitted her admirer with a gentle bow, and began a conversation with us, in which she displayed intelligence and wit, adorned by vivacity and elegance of manners. When she perceived that I was drawing the conversation to a close, she said, with attractive politeness, “ I hope, Mr. Balzani, that you will give us the pleasure of seeing you at our house. My mother will be charmed with your acquaint-



ance, I am sure." Her father chimed in, "I hope that you will favor us."

"How do you like her?" asked Onofrio when we were out of hearing.

"She is not ugly," I answered, "and is accomplished; but, in her presence, I feel something freezing me, which I cannot account for."

At this moment, Giuseppe was walking towards us, arm in arm with the midshipman, who on perceiving us, turned in another direction.

"What have you done to midshipman Cosenza?" asked Giuseppe, with a long, serious face.

I stared at him without answering, and he continued:

"It seems that he is jealous of you, because Miss Mazzarielli disregarded him when you approached her. Oh, how furious he is! He is young and thoughtless, and I am afraid there will be some disturbance."

"That boy is crazy," I answered good humoredly.—"And you are a rascal," answered a voice behind me.

Turning, I saw the young man in question, staring at me with a flushed face, and clenched fists. I gave him a stern, severe look, and then, with a slow accent, giving a peculiar stress to each word, I said:

"If it were not for the place in which we are, and for the sake of the name of a lady, I would chastise you, and send you to school, to be taught how to behave in society, before you mingle with it. Hence, sir!"

It seems that Pietro, although he had kept at a respectful distance, had not lost sight of me, for when at my words Mr. Cosenza writhing in his frame, hissed the words, "You shall hear from me!" I saw Pietro standing with pale face, behind him, and looking earnestly at my eyes, perhaps waiting for a sign.



The countenances of my two friends were full of consternation. Giuseppe uttered, sadly :

“ I am sorry !—this young man will make a noise—he will challenge you—what can you do ?—you cannot refuse !”

“ Do not worry about this, my good friend,” I interrupted calmly, “ my manner of thinking is quite different now, from what it was ten years ago. Duelling I deem criminal, cold-blooded murder. If a man is offended with me, and I perceive that I am wrong, I am willing to apologize ; no matter who the man is. If a person offends me willingly I do not heed him, because in acting so he makes himself known, as one unworthy my answering. If he challenges me I spurn him. If he comes to violence, I chastise him in self defence. This is my code of honor.”

Alleging weariness, I took leave of my friends, and bade Pietro call the boat. By this time the moon had risen ; the dark sea was changed into an ocean of silver, and the white sandy beach of the shores glittered as if with millions of diamonds.

I was plunging into meditations, when Pietro interrupted me, saying :

“ You will pardon the impertinence, sir, but I must tell you, that my hands itched when that puppy insulted you. Only your calm countenance restrained me.”

“ And this,” I answered severely, “ is the proof of your reformation ! At the first slight occasion you would have broken out into a broil ! I thank you for your intention, but I do not require it. Don’t you know that the act of restraining one’s own passions, is nobler and braver, than the conquering a foe of superior strength ?”

He looked at me steadily, with a puzzled face. He was at a loss to comprehend what I meant, but out of respect he did not answer ; and so silently we went our way home.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE AMARYLLIS.

THE fear entertained by my friends, lest Midshipman Cosenza should raise a scandal, was not entirely groundless. Instead of sending his friend to me—as I expected, and for whom I had my answer ready—he went around, fuming and fretting, talking, boasting, bragging, and threatening every kind of infliction upon me, if I durst to call on Miss Muzziarielli. But he never sought me personally, and although I could not help fearing that he would dare do any thing, I did not trouble myself about him. I only felt that sense of manly pride, and that spirit of contradiction by which a strong and proud mind is compelled to do a thing, for the reason alone that it is unjustly forbidden; and the greater the danger, the stronger the opposition and the desire to outbrave it. But as Miss Eleonora did not occupy any place in my heart, I could easily control that human instinct, and laugh at the young man whose mind was tortured by jealousy.

I continued my visits at Micali's, my heart and mind vibrating between love and duty. But Adelina's merits helped my strong sense of morality to carry the day. She was always amiable, always charming; but from her countenance there emanated such a sense of innocence and reserve as served to inspire me with the worship of a devotee for his saint, rather than love.

The Countess Galiani was a gay, amiable and accomplished lady. Her palace was the place where the nobility and the third class united. In her weekly crowded balls she reigned as a loved queen. She devoted the other evenings of the week



to the reception of her friends, who were so numerous as to form nightly parties. Through Antonio I had received her complaints for my negligence in not having visited her for a long time. I resolved to call on her one evening, but little thought to meet there Captain Muzzarielli with his daughter. The calumnies which Cosenza had circulated, though without the least cause on my part, made me uneasy in their presence. Still, the courtesy that I received at their hands relieved my discomfort. I invited Miss Eleonora to be my partner in a quadrille, and she accepted. In one of the intervals she said, with an amiable manner, but striving to appear simply formal :

“ We have not had the pleasure yet of seeing you. I hope there is nothing to hinder your fulfilling your promise.”

I perceived by her language, that she was conversant with the behavior of the midshipman, and answered her gently in an under tone : “ I have been very busy, Miss Eleonora, and I shall at my earliest leisure make it my duty to call. I beg of you to believe me a true friend, and to construe my actions, now and ever, as doing homage to the generous esteem and respect that you so worthily enjoy.”

With scorn on her lips, and indignation in her eyes, she answered in a voice hardly articulate : “ What you are alluding to, Mr. Balzani, is beneath my contempt, and so it ought to be beneath yours. To prove this, I wish from you a promise that you will call once, at least.”

Perceiving the proud meaning of her words, and reflecting that a refusal would have entailed a galling mortification upon me, I resolved on my line of action, and earnestly promised to call the following week.

When the quadrille was over, Mr. Muzzarielli boarded me, and with his excessive amiability kept me in tow the whole evening. His conversation turned on Madonnas, Angels, Saints, Miracles and Prodigies—subjects so uncongenial to my frame of mind, that in the effort to refrain from gaping I became ex-



ceedingly nervous. Finally, he concluded by apprising me of an acquisition he had made of an original painting ; to see which, he engaged me to come to his house on Monday of the following week

The baroness Micali had observed the serious behavior that I had assumed for some time past ; and with her usual dignified amiability, had made some remarks on it. I avoided them as best I could by the common-place plea of a slight indisposition.

Oh, if she could have detected the stormy passions, which were hidden within my breast ! Since my morbid feelings had suggested that I could not make her daughter happy, what would I not have done to insure her happiness !—The sacrifice of my own I deemed as nothing.

The Monday afternoon, on the evening of which I had engaged to call at Mr. Mazzarielli's, decided my future destinies.

At Micali's I found two visitors. They were a mother and daughter, belonging to the old aristocracy, but not rich. They were both tall, and rather handsome. The mother wore a turban of pink gauze, which gave to her a proud, sultana-like mien. When Adelina saw me enter with a bunch of amaryllis in my hand, she ran to me with sparkling eyes, exclaiming in her musical tone,

" Oh, how beautiful they are, Mr. Balzani ! What do you call them ? "

" Amaryllis, " I answered, amused by the earnest expression of her looks, such as are only worn by innocent creatures.

She took the flowers in her hand and after having observed them curiously for a few moments, she said :

" I have seen the Amaryllis entirely red, but I have never seen any like these, so beautifully and symmetrically striped red and white ! "

Placing two chairs at a small marble-topped centre table, I said :



"Please sit down and I will explain it to you."

Taking one flower in my hand I began :

"This is a species of the lilaceous tribe, properly called Lily Asphodel. This genus of *hexapetalous campanulates* have a peculiar mode of fecundation. If at a proper time you cut off all the stamens of the flowers, borne by a plant of this genus, and place the stamens of another species, reversed into its hollow, so that the fecundating molecules, which are at the top of the stamens, touch its bottom, the following year the flowers produced by the same bulb, add to their original color, that of the flower whose stamens were placed in it. This was originally an Amaryllis entirely red ; a man by the name of Gravina, applied to it the stamen of the white lily, which begat this beautiful variety, and it was called after the author—Amaryllis-Gravina."

Miss Adelina was seated opposite me in an attitude of attention : her head a little bent towards me, and her liquid eyes fixed in a manner, that spoke interest, and pleasure, in what I was explaining in my usually animated manner, rendered a little excited by the sight of that sweet and angelical beauty gazing at me. She did not notice the entrance, from the door behind me, of the lady with the pink turban. Chance would have it that my eyes fell on the mirror hanging on the opposite side, and I saw her stopping behind me. Her looks darted several times, from one to the other ; then curling up her lips, and giving me a look of contempt she glided away.

At that sight I felt spell-bound ; my blood rushed violently to my head, and immediately receded to my heart ; leaving the body as cold as ice ; a clammy perspiration inundated my frame, and I could not say another word. Miss Adelina looked at me alarmed, and exclaimed with distress : "What ails you, Mr. Balzani ?"

"Oh, nothing," I ejaculated with an effort, "only a momentary indisposition, which is already over."



After dusk I took leave. Slowly swaying, tottering, staggering like a drunken man, I made my way. I was in my room before I could realize my situation. The scornful gesture of that lady had stung me to the quick, and paralyzed my powers of reflection. Recovered somewhat from the first attack of maddening wrath, in which disappointment and distress were blended, with a sigh or rather sob of agony, I rose from my chair and began to pace the room. I will not enlarge on the grief, anger, scorn, that my morbid sensitiveness, at the realization of the fears which had engrossed my thoughts, made me feel at that moment. After a few turns, I stopped, stamped my foot on the floor, and exclaimed: "So it ought to be! I foresaw it! That look of contempt spoke volumes! If she married me she would become unhappy! Oh, I am so glad that she has not the shadow of suspicion that I love her!—Now Alfio, be a man! Recruit all thy manly energies, extinguish this love; even if the effort should cost thee thy life!—But must I not see her any more?—No! this would be cowardice. I will not lose her sweet friendship; I will love her as a daughter. But can I accomplish all this with a heart in a condition like mine? I shall see, I trust I can, because I must!"

At this moment my mother came in, carrying a small painting in her hands. It was a well executed picture of a copse, having in the foreground two peasant lovers sitting upon the trunk of a fallen tree.

"A poor painter brought it this afternoon," she said, passionately, "he would sell it for two dollars. Will you buy it?"

"Yes, dear mother," I answered, "and so much the more, because it reminds me of an engagement, that I had entirely forgotten."

So I kissed my affectionate mother, and went to captain Mazzarielli's, accompanied by Pietro.

The reception I had received was very cordial. The family



was composed of father, mother and three girls, Miss Eleonora being the oldest.

After having shown the newly bought Madonna, and talked, at least, for half an hour about the saints and miracles, the captain begged to be excused, on account of an engagement.

"Mr. Balzani," said Miss Eleonora earnestly, when her father was gone, "I feel very much gratified at your noble behavior to that ridiculous boy, Cosenza, and I wish to have some occasion to show you, by deeds, my gratitude."

"I am amply repaid," I answered, gallantly, "by your approbation."

The evening passed in pleasant conversation. Her winning manners made me forget that shuddering impression I had received, when first I saw her.

Among other topics, she asked me, "Do you like flowers?"

The word *flowers* touched a delicate string in my heart, and made it vibrate with pain. An instantaneous, wild, painful, scorching thought flashed in my mind; with a frantic resolution I grasped it; and the sacrifice of my heart was firmly resolved upon.

The arrival of her father, just at this moment of exaltation, gave the last stroke to my fatal destiny.

I asked that gentleman to allow me a few minutes of private conversation with him, and went to another room.

Trembling, and with ill articulated speech, I asked Mr. Mazzarelli the favor of being admitted as a suitor for Miss Eleonora's hand. He looked at me with a radiant face, taking my nervousness for love, and with solemn accents said:

"If my daughter be pleased, and with the blessing of the Madonna, I accept you to my home and heart, as the legitimate betrothed of my beloved daughter."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE OATH.

I HAD conquered myself, and I was proud of it. Deeply, deeply I felt the loss in my heart, but the knowledge that my suffering was in a noble cause, that of her happiness, made me endure the martyrdom with the cheerfulness of a saint. Those who know not what true love is cannot understand the feelings of bliss, the richness of joy one feels in sacrificing his own self, for one he loves. With my declaration at Mr. Muzzarielli's, I had taken an engagement, which barred my idea of love in other quarters, and served as an antidote against the warm promptings of my heart. But could I unmake my heart? Could I expel that love which took possession of my being against my will? This was almost impossible, I knew. Nevertheless, I could try to turn it into another channel, into a fatherly love. I set my mind firmly on this, and it will be seen in the course of my narrative, how, by dint of all reflection and self control I succeeded fully in my arduous undertaking.

My visits at Micali's continued twice a week unremittingly, always taking a flower or a plant, as a subject for study. My forced hilarity did not give them occasion to suspect my self-imposed calamity.

Sometimes a thought, in the shape of remorse struck me, when I was in the presence of my betrothed: Am I acting rightly with this girl? My reflections in answer ran thus—there is active and passive love. The first gives joy to the person who feels it; the second, which is felt by the supposition of another's



love, brought by external demonstrations, combines with the former the bliss of conjugal life. Thus if the woman loves her husband, and he although unloving fulfils all his duties, esteems her, and endeavors, by all means, to make her happy, there is no deception in sight of God and man.

This casuistry set my conscience at rest.

The wedding had been appointed for the nineteenth of December. Many times I had made up my mind to break the news to the Micali family, but when in their presence I did not find the courage to communicate it. I felt as a man who has to confess a crime. I flattered myself with the hope that some one else would have told them, and in this hope I must own I acted in a manner most disrespectful toward them. As my most intimate and true friends, they were entitled to my full confidence, and should have heard it from my own lips.

About this time a new phase occurred in my life. Being the first clerk in the chancery, and having acquitted myself with satisfaction in the examinations, I was promoted by the government to the function of Chancellor of the Court of Appeal—a very desirable and influential office.

This high tribunal is composed of six judges, a president, the attorney-general, and a chancellor. Collectively they act as jurymen, and decide by majority of votes.

The Chancellor is a very important functionary. He is the notary of the Court. All sentences and acts of the Court must be written in his hand, and signed by the President and himself; any act written by any other member is null. The chancellor in a word has the control of the acts of the courts and of the lawyers.

This unexpected elevation at my early age, filled me with pleasure; considering the importance of the office, and the splendid emoluments which were attached to it. Still there was a drawback which diminished my pleasure. To mistrust my fitness for any high enterprise, has been a bug-bear, which



has accompanied me through the course of my life ; and this time I felt it sensibly. Besides, I had to take an oath to observe and guard the law, and of love, obedience, and fidelity to the king. This last was too much for me.

In the afternoon I went to bishop D., with a cloud on my countenance. He had quite recovered from his illness, but was still weak. I told him of my promotion, and of my scruples attendant upon it.

"How can I swear," I exclaimed with bitterness, "to respect, to be faithful, to uphold the tyrant of our people, the murderer of my father!"

"No," answered the bishop, quickly, "if you utter the words, calling God as a witness, you must abide their meaning, if it cost your life! I refuse the theory of mental reservation, invented by the jesuits."

"Thus," I groaned, "all my aspirations at magistrature vanish for ever!"

The good bishop pressed his lips, contracted his brow, and with a hand on his chin, bent his head, and fell into deep meditation. Now and then he uttered—no—impossible—nonsense—and fell into thought again. Finally, I saw in his countenance sparkling a ray of hope, before he exclaimed :

"Alfio, come here to-morrow at seven o'clock. The doctors have ordered me exercise in the morning. To-morrow, I shall have the pleasure of taking a walk, with the support of your arm."

I was puzzled by this abrupt speech, which had nothing to do with my case, and began to think that his mind commenced to grow weak ; still I complied with his wishes. The following day I was there at the appointed time, and the bishop went out, supporting himself on my arm. Slowly we walked in *via Toledo* towards the royal palace. On reaching the *quattro cantoni* we saw a number of idlers assembled in a group, and approached them to see what had happened.



It must be known that, before the church of saint Giuseppe, where the sidewalk is more spacious, on account of the receding building, there sat every morning half a dozen men, on straw chairs, placed in a row, at equal intervals, one from another. Each man was clad in a suit of black, shining with the grease of many years, and covered with a hat which had endured the storms of many winters. They held on their laps a board, two feet square, stained with ink, and covered with a sheet of blotting paper; having on the right a small horn ink-stand. They were the public secretaries. The serious and solemn physiognomies of those men betokened secrecy. Their look was steady and haughty, as of persons who did not fear reproach. They generally sat with their arms folded on their chest, spectacles raised on the forehead, a quill stuck behind the ear, and with a glance of scrutiny at the passers by. When engaged, their aspects acquired a frown of importance; a servant girl, a clown, or a peasant, stood on the writer's left, pouring a torrent of words into his ear, bent to that side; and the quill running rapidly in his hand.

There is no instance that one of these men has ever trifled with the secrets entrusted to him by that poor class of the community.

They sell their skill by measure. A piece of stick, ten inches long, lay on the board. With this they measure their writing and charge *five grani*—two cents—for that length.

At our approach, the crowd, out of respect, gave way, and we beheld a little old woman crying for mercy, and one of the scribes holding a sheet of written paper, with his left hand; pointing at it with the fore-finger of the right, and exclaiming, "You wept! then you must pay ten grani."

"What is the matter with you, good woman?" interposed the bishop, in his charitable and kindly manner.

"I am a poor woman" she answered, piteously, "my boy is a soldier in Naples, and I have not heard from him these three



years. My heart is breaking, and I came to this gentleman to have a letter written, and bargained for it for five grani—the money for my to-day's bread!"

"This woman tells half the story, Monsignore," interrupted the secretary with a business-like seriousness. "I told this woman before-hand that the composition was interesting, and I could not do it less than ten grani. Besides, it is double the measure, (in so saying he measured the writing with his stick twice). She agreed, at the end, to pay my price, provided that the letter proved to be well written. I wrote it, and in reading it to her, she was so moved that she cried like a baby.

"Now, sir, you may perceive that the question is about the merit of the letter. She alleges that it is not good, and will pay five grani." The bishop was amused at the tone of importance the man assumed, and the cunning of the poor woman. Slowly he thrust his hand into his pocket, pulled out a green silk purse, and handed ten grani to the secretary, and a small silver coin to the poor woman. When we reached the large square of the royal palace, he said:

"Now, my dear Alfio, I must own that yours is a very delicate case of conscience, and I have not been able to solve it. We are going to the cathedral of the palace, to witness the taking of the oath by canon Giotto. He is a philosopher, a man of sterling integrity, a good Christian, and as great a liberal as you are. So you see that, in some degree, he is placed in the same position as yourself. I resolved to take you there, and see how he manages it; so some idea may come to aid us in solving our problem."

The *Cappella Palatina*, or Cathedral of the Palace, is a monument of ancient splendor. By its Moorish and Norman styles of architecture and ornamentings, it may be easily conjectured that it was first a Saracen mosque, reduced to a church by Count Ruggiero. The outside and inside of this church is full of the finest mosaics, and encrusted with *pietre*



*dure*—precious stones of various colors. Statues, gilding, paintings, surrounded with arabesques and porphyry columns, make of it one of the most interesting monuments of antiquity.

When we entered, the function of the installment of the new canon was approaching. Bishop D. led me to the choir, and managed adroitly to place me near the altar.

Few persons belonging to the palace were in the church. The lieutenant-general was sitting inside the royal box. A file of soldiers, with a drummer, stood near the door, and two sentinels before the railings of the choir. All the canons sat in their stalls, adorned with their rich apparels; and a bishop stood in pontifical robe on the platform of the altar, where the large book of the mass lay open.

The new canon approached, ascended the steps of the altar, placed his hand on the gospel, and uttered rapidly the long-worded oath.

Outside the palace we found the carriage of Bishop D. with its old mules.

“Now what do you think of it?” asked my venerable friend, when we were comfortably rolling our way back.

“I could not understand a single word of the oath,” I answered; “the only words I could hear, now and then, were: our king—Ferdinand Second—law—religion—and nothing else.”

The bishop looked at me impressively, and said: “Did you not comprehend?”

“No, Monsignore.”

“Then I will tell you. Cannon Giotta did not take any oath. He rolled his tongue as a man who reads quickly in a low voice, but he uttered nothing but the few words you heard, which form no oath at all.”

Impressed with the formality of which I had been a spectator, the following morning I went to perform the ceremony of taking my oath of allegiance.



The sight of the court of appeal was something inspiring veneration and awe. It was a large hall, one hundred feet by fifty, having the walls painted in fresco, and the ceiling with uncovered rafters in the Saracenic style. A mahogany railing at two-thirds of its length, formed the barrier which separated the audience from the magistrates. A platform two steps in height extended from wall to wall, leaving between it and the railings a space of six feet, where small tables were placed, for the accommodation of lawyers, in the time of discussion. A circular board, in the form of a horse-shoe, covered with green cloth to the floor, occupied three-fourths of the platform. The words *La Legge*—the law—in large letters, hung from the centre of it. A large silver crucifix stood on the table just above those words, a little to the right. Large, high-backed, carved, black-walnut chairs, lined with green velvet, were situated around the platform, for the judges, the central one being more elevated, as that belonging to the president. At the two ends of this horse-shoe two small tables, decked in the same fashion, formed a continuation, although there was a space one foot from the main board. That on the right was the seat of the attorney-general, the other being that of the chancellor. Green silk curtains adorned the balconies. Two large full length standing portraits, representing the king and the queen, hung on the wall behind the chair of the president; having on the opposite wall those of the deceased ones, with a large clock in the centre. The costume of the magistrate is peculiar, and at the same time graceful: it is made entirely of black silk, and consists of breeches fastened at the side of the knees, with gold buckles; black silk stockings and buckled pumps; a waistcoat with long sleeves tight to the arm, and trimmed in front with rich and expensive white lace; a loose jacket, rather longer than what is called a pea jacket, but in the same form; the sleeves puffed and slashed in the Spanish style, but wide and flowing so as to show the under sleeve; white cravat without



collar ; but in front there is worn a square of eight inches made of paste board, and covered with fine linen, and cut to fit the neck ; it is made so, that it sets out from the throat and allows the beard to rest upon it. Over the whole is thrown a large mantle of the same material ; which, being kept constantly thrown back, displays the dress in front, and adds considerably to the effect, which is graceful in the extreme. They also wear a black felt hat, *a la* Confucius, that is, with a low round crown and a broad brim.

At nine o'clock I was called by an usher from the chancellory. At my entering the hall, the large number of lawyers assembled there ; the perfect silence ; the softness of the light, caused by the green curtains ; and the stern and venerable aspect of those gray haired magistrates, sitting in their pomp, struck me with awe, and my knees trembled at the mock oath I was going to make. Still I nerved myself and performed the mummery, just as I had witnessed it on the preceding day.

The president, with whom I afterwards became intimate, said to me in good humor :

“ Yours was no oath at all, because you did not pronounce a single word, and, but for compassion of your nervous state, I would have caused you to repeat it over again, distinctly, word by word.”



## CHAPTER XIX.

### LIFE IN COURT.

THE news of my wedding took the Micali family by surprise. It is customary to apprise one's intimate friends of one's marriage, but I had not found the courage to do so. When afterwards they learned it, they felt highly offended; and the baroness, although she never upbraided me, was so incensed, that for years after I could perceive that she did not receive me with pleasure. I knew that I had been wrong, and, for atonement, determined to abide meekly their displeasure.

Now I had two tasks in hand most difficult for human nature to achieve; that of transferring my passion for Adelina into a fatherly love; and to acquire for my new wife, that kind of esteem, admiration and respect, which is akin to love.

By dint of calling her by the pet names of my child, and my daughter, and of forcing my mind assiduously upon it, I succeeded in loving Miss Micali as such, and in taking for her all the interest that an affectionate father is wont to do.

There is a story of a man who having been called baron, in jest by one of his friends, felt so offended at the mock title, that he quarrelled with, and struck the offender. This morbid sensitiveness excited the mirth of all his acquaintances, and all called him *baron*. The higher his anger arose, the wider spread the epidemic for so calling him. Lastly he gave it up. The sham title remained as an appendage to his name, and he became so used to it, that, after a time he thought in good faith, that he was entitled to it; and he was so exacting of it, that if not called baron, he showed displeasure.



So it is with human nature ! By forcing my mind day and night, into the idea of thinking of her as a daughter, I ended by loving her as such. In fact, on the occasion of the baron's buying a mansion in one of the fashionable streets of the city, where they received many visitors, how busy I was in seeking information of the character of those young men, who began to surround her. How many pangs have I suffered, when I beheld a profligate fop going near her ! I wished to see her married to a man, who could make her completely happy

Thrown into society, she had become the star, the belle, the centre of admiration. I always avoided to speak of, or to praise her, but when others did it, I felt the pleasure of a father. Finally she married in her own circle.

M. Pergola was a young man of medium size, with light complexion, and very regular features. On his countenance lay that kind of rest and tranquility which speaks goodness. His temperament was quiet and calm, but, to my great content, he deeply loved his wife, Adelina. She became the pride and ornament of the aristocratic families ; and her beauty and attainments were the wonder and envy of all who composed her circle of acquaintances. But position and flattery had not the power of changing her sweet and modest bearing.

Eleonora's manners and winning ways, were such as to captivate my affections. The respect and attachment that she showed for my mother and sister, and the interest that she took in everything congenial to me, convinced me of her love. I tried to please her in everything that was in my power to make her happy.

Three years have already passed since the commencement of the present chapter. Pietro had quite reformed, and, with a little help, started again in business.

My father-in-law showed for me the highest esteem and respect. He never called me, but by the name of Chancellor. As he was intimate with the high aristocracy of the Court, he



took me to the right and to the left, to make me acquainted with them. He also introduced me to one of the brothers of king Ferdinand, with whom he was on friendly terms.

This afforded me ample opportunity to see and study what is called life at Court.

My natural abhorrence for this clique, which forms the tyranny, was doubly increased by a nearer survey.

I will try to give here a sketch of it, just as I observed it.

If it happens that amongst my readers there is one who sympathizes with tyranny, (a thing that I cannot believe), I advise him, to skip directly to the next chapter; because the reading of my experience might irritate his feelings, and I like to be at peace with every one.

The nobility which swarm at court, are generally haughty and reserved, and the most of them ignorant. The privilege they aspire to is, to attend upon the person of the king and his family, in the most abject personal services. To counter-balance this heavy weight of personal servitude, they have the beatitude of being near the anointed, of touching his sacred person, (no matter in what kind of service), of wearing a rich gilt livery, and of carrying a diamond breast or cross, hanging at their necks.

Their most acceptable compensation is, to be tacitly allowed, to spurn, ill-treat, and taunt with impunity, the inferior classes.

To this nobility of blood, are added the magistrature, and the officers of the army, from the major upwards; but these have not the privilege of personal servitude.

This circle of courtiers being composed of persons, each of whom is a centre of motion, of the great machine of state, form the clique of tyranny. These are the sub-tyrants. The abuses they commit on the lower classes, are of such a character, that they, very often, show the tyrant worse than he really is. But it cannot be avoided; they need each other: the king has



need of them to keep the nation enslaved ; and they require his favors, to tyrannize over their inferiors.

Kings and courtiers cannot do without each other ; and, besides their mutual aid, they must bear with each other at times, because they know very well, that they are knit together, by those inextricable bonds of fellowship of villanies.

The life of the court is a life of pandemonium. Every courtier aspires to be nearer to the royal person, to receive a larger flow of favor's electric current, so as to be able to use tyranny downwards with more power.

A flood of hatred pervades the whole body. Each member hates all the others ; some through jealousy, some through fear. All whirl round in those splendid court pageantries, dinners, and balls, like the souls spoken of by Dante, in the third canto of the *Inferno*.

Now and then there is the levee—oh, what a blessing is the levee ! Courtiers, officers and magistrates wait in the great gallery. All eyes look anxiously at a door, as if at the gate of the promised land.

After a while, that blessed door is thrown open. The king appears through it ! How affable he is ! And the courtiers bow and fawn, and each one vies with the other to show more servility and abject humiliation. And the king paces slowly around in all his holiness. Here he bestows a smile, there a whisper, and a promise elsewhere.

How much will it cost them—those smiles, promises, and whispers ! These being signs of favor, all draw near the favored ones ; and the protestations of friendship pour on them like a torrent. The slighted ones, although singly enemies, turn round and join together in a body to annihilate their common foe—the new favorites. They smile with their lip and their half-closed eyes. There is no word or gesture which does not convey interest and love ; but all is hatred in their hearts.



The right hand often presses the bosom to express sympathy or allegiance, but the heart, in court, is a stranger to every feeling but hatred and ambition.

Through long practice of self-control, they have arrived at such perfection of feigning as to puzzle the deepest physiognomist. But they do not deceive each other. All know that they hate reciprocally, but still perform the farce wonderfully well.

As to the relations of the courtiers towards the king, they have a personal interest in supporting him, but they do not love him. The life of the king is still more wretched than theirs. He is afraid of every one. The dread of poisons, daggers, conspiracies, weighs like an incubus on his heart. He has need of his tools, but he watches them all, and makes each one the spy of the other.

An imaginary suspicion or a slander sometimes makes a person obnoxious to the king. He does not annihilate the suspected person, nay, he places him nearer to his person, and pours on him a shower of favors, in order to lull him, to cause him to think himself secure, to watch him with lynx-eye, and catch him in open flagrancy ; then crush him legally. This is court living.

What I have said about the nobility, must not be understood without exception. It is due to the truth to observe, that many noble families keep aloof from the court ; and there are a number of them, whose members are not only well educated, but adorned with virtuous and generous qualities.



## CHAPTER XX.

### THE GROTTA.

HAPPINESS or misfortune comes from no other agency than our own. It befalls, or takes shape in our mind, in accordance with our mode of acting or thinking.

He is happy who thinks himself so. To some men the world appears glorious, joyous, truthful, happy; and, in whatever circumstance of life they are, they do not fail to find—even in misfortune—some reason for consolation, some ground for fortitude. On the contrary, other men take great pains in creating and fostering their own grievances, and they inculcate and abuse the world or the times, which have nothing at all to do with it.

Five years of married life had smoothly rolled on. Adelina was happy, and I felt happy, for I saw fulfilled the goal of my life, and accepted and nursed this feeling as a reward due to the sufferings it had cost me. I continued to call her daughter, and she displayed for me such true, earnest and sincere friendship, as to be a living rebuke to those skeptics who deny the existence of disinterested friendship.

My wife was already the mother of three children—two boys and a girl. I called the first Pietro, after my father; the second Giulietta, and the third Anselmo.

Eleonora's manners and attentions towards me had succeeded in completely infatuating me. I felt happy. In a station which brought me respect in society, and ample means of living; with a good and lovely wife, and three dear children, I had nothing more to hope for in this world, and I thanked the



Almighty for his blessings. I had made of my house the temple of happiness, where, when my business was over, I went to bask in that atmosphere of delight, formed by those loving and beloved beings. My joy was to see them rejoicing; my happiness, to behold them happy.

One evening toward dusk, at an hour when children are generally boisterous, I was indulging in one of these contented moods. Eleonora sat beside me on a sofa, with her head resting on my chest. With my right arm over her shoulder, I was caressing alternately her and the baby which was on her bosom; whilst Pietro was standing by my side, playing with my watch-chain and charms, asking for the hundredth time the name of those little things; and Giulietta was on the sofa, playing with my beard and hair.

"Oh, how happy I feel!" I exclaimed. "It is so pleasant to see my family all gathered round my neck! And to think that these innocent beings are my children, my own children; oh, it is a blessing that I would not change for an empire! Look at them, Eleonora; don't you feel as if you would pour your soul on them? Nay, as if they were a continuation of your soul?"

"Yes," she gasped, and a big tear dropped from her eye.

At this moment the valet entered, announcing Mr. de Tourville. My wife with her children retired, and the visitor was introduced.

"I am charmed to see you again in Palermo," I exclaimed, with surprise.

"Here I am again," he answered, with a mysterious tone. "I have been in Paris, travelled the south of France, visited the principal cities of Italy, and now I am here to speak to you on important business. This afternoon I saw our friend Giuseppe Nobile, and communicated the matter to him; but he referred me to you."



I gazed at him steadfastly, and striving to appear simply curious, I asked, "What is it?"

He looked round the room, as if he would ascertain that we were alone; then gazed at me impressively. I understood his doubts, and, much puzzled, I said, "Let us go into the library."

On entering there I turned the key, and said: "Now tell me what is the matter."

He took hold of my hands, and shaking them violently he exclaimed:

"Great news, my friend! The whole of France is in a blaze! The day of redemption is at hand!"

"What!" I asked in a voice hardly articulate, from the tumult raising within my breast; "is there already a revolution in France?"

"Not so soon," he answered, deprecatingly; "but the great nation is awakening from her lethargy, and the fatal blow will be given, when all the people of Europe shall be ready to proclaim the general brotherhood. I have seen the leaders throughout France, I have travelled in Italy with great satisfaction, and here ends my mission."

I tried not to betray my emotion, and spoke of the difficulties of such great enterprises, and of the unfortunate terminations of those of 1792, 1820.

Whilst in this unpleasant position, of giving evasive and non-committal answers, in speaking of a cause for which I would have freely given my life, a sound of vocal music from the street came to my relief, interrupting the train of our conversation. These were four different female voices, which began to sing in concert the praise of a saint, with such sweetly blended melody, that it touched the heart, and enchanted the senses. Mr. de Tourville bent his ear to listen, An unbroken silence for a minute prevailed, when I took a



coin, wrapped it in paper, and setting fire to the end, I threw it from the balcony.

When the song came to its close Mr. de Tourville exclaimed :

“ *Ma foi*, this does not sound like a beggar’s song ! In those voices there is gentility and cultivation.”

“ Yes,” I answered, gloomily, “ those singers have seen better days ! Many a gentle family is reduced to beggary by the loss of its head ; and they would rather die than openly beg. In the evening, they wrap themselves up tightly, and using as a resource their well trained voices, unknown to any one, they beg for their bread.”

That night I could not sleep. Although, for policy, I received the communication coldly, my mind was excited and my heart beat violently.

Early the following morning, I went to find Giuseppe, and with him, to my surprise, I found Ettore, the marquis della Torre, who had arrived from his tour the preceding day. I related the revelations of Mr. de Tourville, on which Ettore said : “ It is all right. I have seen the leaders of the different Italian states, who work unanimously. The assassination of the heroic brothers Bandiera has given a thrill to the minds, even of those who are timid or phlegmatic. In a word, the nation is stirring. Those of Rome wish to wait the election of a new Pope, before the outbreak. They remark that, Gregorio is well rooted with the foreign powers, and internal adherents ; and that a new man is more easily overthrown. God knows how many years of uncertainty must pass, before the fulfilment of this plan.”

“ Oh ! I hope,” I exclaimed, emphatically, “ that Sicily will be the first to raise the battle cry !”

“ Amen,” answered Ettore. “ But now to work. I have been apprised of some names of persons, who are united, here and in Messina ; we must join them, and toil incessantly to



spread the apostolate throughout the Island. By the by : Antonio, Onofrio, and Domenico, who returned six months ago, are on their places in the country, and it is necessary that they should be informed ; but we cannot trust these matters to paper."

"It is nothing," I interrupted. "To-day is the first of October, and being vacation month, I shall go round to see them, and give a commencement to our work."

The same day I announced to my wife that I intended to visit several places in the country. She spoke with interesting eloquence of her loneliness ; and sweetly but warmly pleaded, I should not leave her. In three days I was *en route* to Onofrio's place.

I will not enlarge on the cordial reception I received at my friend's. He already knew something about the movement, and showed his delight at being called upon as one of the active members.

I cautioned him to use circumspection, and advised him, that the work, at the present time, should be limited to informing the people of their rights, and explaining to them the difference between liberty and license.

A few miles distance from Onofrio was the place of our friend Antonio. One beautiful afternoon I expressed my wish to go there, to discuss matters with him. It being only eight miles distant, I preferred to go alone, and promised to bring him with me, on my return.

Mounted upon a beautiful horse, I began to wind my way slowly up a high and sloping ascent, which terminated with a long ridge of mountains. My path was on a beaten track, made by the continual tread of the wayfarer. The air was fragrant and balmy, and I reached the range immersed in my revolutionary thoughts.

When on the summit I turned to cast a glance at the beautiful scenery. Not a single tree could be seen in that vast



mountain descent; which ended with a prolonged thicket of orange bushes. On the sloping expanse, from the velvet grass, rose a number of white pyramids, which announced the presence of as many mouths of sulphur mines. The sun was just hiding behind the mountains, and its last golden beams, falling on the summits of the calcareous piles were reflected back from millions of points, that sparkled like so many fire-flies.

Whilst absorbed in the observation of the beauty of that scenery, the awful sound of the words, *non senti?*\* uttered from behind a rock at a few feet distance, struck me with dismay. Instantaneously I obeyed the command, reining up my horse, alighting, and throwing myself on the ground. I immediately heard the tread of several men, and a heavy cloak was thrown upon my head.

Here a conversation in husky tones commenced—beat him—kill him—crush his head with a stone—each word accompanied by an oath. In the mean time several hands were thrust into my pockets, and I felt my watch, purse, and knife gone. Then a roaring voice thundered, “This is not all—impossible—*Ladro!*—thief! where do you hide your money?—tell us in an instant, or your life is not worth one *grano!*”

“Kill him—choke him—crush him—hang him,” echoed other terrible voices, and the sharp point of a dagger was placed to my loins.

Now, indeed, my situation was a fearful one! Alone, and without hope of human help; in the hands of remorseless villains, and with a dagger piercing my flesh! My hair rose up; a clammy perspiration covered my frame; and I was so terror-stricken as to be scarcely able to raise my thoughts to God, to have mercy on my soul. Still the last words uttered

*Non senti?* Don't you hear? are words usually uttered by highwaymen, as an intimation to the traveller, to throw himself immediately on the ground, or otherwise he is shot.



by the robbers, sharpened my faculties, into the clear perception of the terrible situation in which I was ; courage returned to me ; and with free and bold utterance I said :

“ Well, gentlemen, my situation here is not of the easiest. I cannot breathe with the dust in my mouth and nose. You have already taken what I possess at this moment. If you are in need of more, I can send to some place to have a supply ; but take me out of this uncomfortable position. I do not fear you ! ”

A conversation in whispers of some ten minutes ensued, which seemed to me ten hours ; and finished with the loud and resolute words of one of them, who said : “ I want to have it so, and so it shall be. ”

After this I felt several hands placed within my pockets again. Then the same voice said :

“ Now we leave you ; you must remain a quarter of an hour in the same position without moving your head ; then you will mount your horse and continue your way without turning to look back. If you transgress in the least, a ball shall whistle through your brains. ”

Some whispers passed among them, and the same man continued, “ Promise that you will not tell tales. ”

“ I do, ” I answered, curtly.

“ Swear. ”

“ You have my word. I never swear. ”

A few more whispers, and I heard the sound of their receding steps.

More than twenty minutes I remained in that position, for fear that a miscalculation of time, either on my side, or on theirs, might cost me my life. When I thought that the allotted time was doubly elapsed, I remounted my horse, and put it to a canter along the ridges of the mountains.

To my astonishment, I found my watch and purse in their former place, and the horse in good order, with its port man-



teau tied behind. My mind was bewildered, and I could not connect my ideas. The passed danger; the sudden and unexpected salvation; and the restoration of my property; were all things so discordant, and so contradictory to the usual unscrupulous ferocity of banditti, that my brain was in a whirl.

Scarcely had I ridden half a mile, before my ear caught the clatter of a horse's hoofs following in my direction.

Had the robbers repented of having released me? Was it another party? or a friendly wayfarer? It seemed, that I was doomed that evening to dreadful anxieties. To hasten my course or run for my life, was out of the question, because it would have doubled the dangers. Instinctively I would have turned my head and made observations; but I did not dare to do it, recollecting the explicit warning I had received, and knowing that banditti always keep their word.

Whilst my mind was harassed by these conflicting thoughts, the new horseman had gained on me, and to my great discomfort placed himself by my side, saying—Vive Maria—

At my answering with the same salute, the following conversation ensued:

“Beautiful night, sir.”

“Very pleasant.”

“It is very dangerous, sir, to travel at this time in this locality.”

“I have no fear.”

“I think you are well armed.”

“With a good conscience.”

“Have you seen any one on this path?”

“What do you expect to meet in this lonely place but mountains and rocks?”

“I think you are going to the next town, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know me, sir?”



"I do not know who you are."

The sound of his voice was something I had heard before, but I could not recollect in what place or circumstance. I tried to compare it with that of the spokesman of the banditti, but could not find any resemblance to it. These banditti have two or three different sounds of voice at their command.

By this time we had reached a woody place with a hill rising on the left.

"I advise you to quit the main road, and go this way," said my man, pointing to a tortuous ascending path.

I reined in my horse, and with instantaneous resolution, I drew a pistol from the saddle-bow, and pointed it at the man, saying: "Hence, for your life!"

This time I was man to man, and I was resolved not to die unrevenged. But the man, far from touching the gun which lay across his saddle, as I had expected he would, waved his right hand to me, saying with a humorous chuckle:

"Put up your little barker, sir. These are dangerous and treacherous toys, sir. Suppose that I intended to harm you, do you think that I would be so silly as to warn you? I am a friend, sir; and if I wish you to deviate from your path it is for the sake of giving a pleasant surprise to my dear wife Maria, once Maria Spinoso; do you understand me now, sir?"

The sound of that name was a flood of light, which expelled the darkness by which my adventure was surrounded, explained its mysterious turnings, and brought with it tranquility and security.

He was the man who had been saved by me through the instrumentality of my friend Giuseppe. When I spoke to the banditti, he, who was the leader, recognized my voice, and protected me.

It is a special study of banditti to retain in their memory voices and physiognomies.

Now that all grounds for fear or doubt had vanished, and



being rather pleased with the nature of the adventure, I signified to the bandit that I would willingly follow him. On we went through narrow and circuitous pathways, ascending and descending, until we were at the edge of a narrow but very deep ravine. There my guide invited me to alight; and placing two fingers in his mouth, emitted a shrill whistle, which was answered by another similar one at a distance.

He took off his boots and hid them in a thicket, extracting from the same place another pair whose soles were armed with sharp-pointed nails. When he had put them on, a man appeared who took away our horses.

Then he said: "You must have the patience, dear sir, to descend behind me, placing your hands for support on my shoulders." The descent of the ravine was so precipitous that it seemed only practicable for goats, still we went safely down. A log placed across the torrent gave us passage to the other side, which we ascended half way, the highest part being a mass of smooth perpendicular rock.

At this spot my guide cautiously raised a thick shrub, and displayed the entrance to a narrow grotto. When we were in, he whistled, and a noise was heard from the inside, as of drawing a bolt. Then he placed his muscular shoulder against the rock which slowly turned, and a light became visible. On our entering, the stone rolled to its original position.

The first object which presented itself was the sweet and handsome face of Maria, his wife, who not having at first recognized me, and believing that I was a prisoner to be taxed with a ransom, exclaimed with a soft voice, and an imploring countenance: "Oh, Matteo! another! another!"

"You are a dear little fool!" said Matteo, kissing her cheek; "look, don't you see the chancellor, your friend, our friend! Did I not promise you that I would not make any more prisoners? This is only a visit to you, darling. The chancellor was travelling on these mountains, and has favored us by stopping



here for a night. Now, whilst I prepare supper, you will show him our stronghold."

The entrance of this grotto was large enough to be divided into two neatly furnished bed-rooms, leaving a hall in the centre. Beyond, there was the receiving room, which was circular, large, and well furnished. This room opened naturally into a kind of square courtyard, the sides being smooth and perpendicular, formed by a natural opening in the mountain. Beyond this sort of yard, the grotto continued and branched into two ways. At the entrance of that on the right, there was a fireplace, with several furnaces. On one was a kettle of boiling water, and on another a sauce-pan, which sent forth the agreeable smell of stufato. Hanging on one side of the rustic wall was a good number of tin and brass kitchen utensils, perfectly clean and shining. On the left, several shelves were filled with glasses, bottles, and every kind of crockery, all in good order.

Farther in this branch of the grotto was a partition with a small door; I entered it, and found hanging there a large number of hams, cheeses and sausages. A pile of charcoal, barrels of flour, hogsheads of wine, baskets of eggs, biscuits, dry fruits, rice, and every sort of provisions, showed the plenty that reigned there. The left branch was narrower, and without any improvements. Hanging on both sides there were harnesses, saddles, pistols, daggers, guns, blunderbusses, horns, swords, and several sets of costumes, including those of monks and priests. The size of this branch I could not ascertain, nor if there was another exit.

On returning to the main point I found a table already prepared for supper, with an elegant set of silver.

"Now," said Matteo, gayly, "that you have seen my castle, be kind enough, sir, to keep my wife company whilst I go to cook the maccheroni. We wretched people, sir, dine at this hour."



Sitting on a sofa beside Maria, I said : " I am very sorry to find you in this position. I hoped something better !"

" Oh, sir !" she replied, with distress in her manner ; " you don't know. When my husband was acquitted by the court, the police, as usual, would not release him, and your friend had to employ the influence of several noblemen to succeed. When we came to the country, a snare was already laid for him, and we were obliged to take refuge in this cave. You may comprehend the rest."

When justice had been done to supper and the bottles were introduced, Matteo asked me how I liked his fortress.

" I think it is impossible for it to be discovered," I said " except by people at the top of the mountain, who may look down into your court-yard."

" That will never happen," he said, with a laugh, " because the summit is barren and inaccessible."

" But I wonder," I observed, " how you could bring your furniture and stores into this place."

" That is my secret," he answered, laughing.

" You have weapons enough to arm a regiment."

This observation made him turn pale as death ; a gloom of sorrow spread over his countenance, and hanging his head, he uttered with bitter feelings :

" My name is—*the public enemy* ! Society fears, spurns, and hates me ! Still—still, those weapons have never drawn a drop of blood ! Oh, how I wish to redeem my name by shedding my blood in favor of the same society which now curses me !"

I felt the deepest sorrow and pity for that wretched man, and with slow, measured words I uttered : " Perhaps the time is not very far distant when your wishes shall be satisfied."

My words told like an electric shock. He suddenly raised his head, and looked at me with eyes distended and sparkling. His hair was erect, his cheeks suffused, his nostrils dilated,



his hands raised nervously, and with a voice of thunder he exclaimed ; " Say the word again, sir ! Ah, do not deceive me ! Say the word again, upon your honor ! "

" Even so," I replied, with emphasis, " the time of regeneration and redemption is near."

His countenance worked with nervous excitement ; tears dropped from his eyes ; his lips trembled with the effort to speak, but words could not find utterance. He half rose from his chair, and extended his hand towards me ; his soul speaking in his suffused eyes. The man, purified by the burning fire of patriotic enthusiasm, forgot the bandit. The awakening of noble thoughts made him equal to virtuous deeds and feelings. With the frankness of a hero, he was prompted to seal the covenant, by the touch of a fellow patriot's hand. But alas ! My repugnance to accept his offered pledge dispersed the vision, and the bandit returned to the consciousness of himself.

With a mixture of dejection and resentment on his face, and with boldness and frankness in his address, he rose up, withdrew his hand, and making an extreme effort, uttered, with the fury and inconsistency of a maniac :

" No, sir ! My polluted hand is not worthy to touch yours ; but here, (drawing a well furbished dagger, and brandishing it in the air,) on this unstained weapon I swear to die for my country ! "

This was followed by a flood of tears, which, considering the position of the man who shed them, could not but excite respect.

A few minutes of silence prevailed, in which I considered—  
" If this class of men had all the same feelings, how would they work for the benefit of our country ! And how society would rejoice, at the return to a good life, of these prodigal sons ! "

After a meditation of some minutes he said : " I can only



pick twenty, unfortunately like myself, and equally desirous to amend their lives. I would not join with other men. When the time comes you will find us among the first ; if the country will not spurn the shedding of our blood !”

Turning round I saw Maria kneeling, with her forehead touching the ground ; sobbing and weeping. Her husband sprang to her. She rose up, with her face radiant with joy, and rendered more beautiful by the tears, which still dropped from her eyes.

“ Oh, God be blessed !” she exclaimed, as if she were in a trance. “ If the Madonna will do me such a sublime grace, I shall burn before her image a wax torch, as tall as my dear, dear Matteo.”

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### BISHOP D. NO MORE.

I SPENT the entire month of October in travelling for the good cause. Besides visiting all my friends and acquaintances, that I deemed trustworthy, I went to see young Bentivegna, whose acquaintance I had made at the boar hunt. I did not deceive myself in my estimate of that heroic young patriot. On receiving my communication he started as though a mighty emotion had seized him, his eyes glared and glittered, his nostrils dilated, his fingers opened and shut convulsively, and grasping my hand, with his body erect, and the steady boldness of an old conspirator, which did not agree with his tender age, he exclaimed :

“ My life, my estates, everything, I will give for my country !”

Oh heroic youth, alas, how nobly thy registered vow was fulfilled !



The month of October passed away happily, and then it seemed as though the Almighty, in his high wisdom, had ordained that I should undergo a series of calamities, which came near making of me a mental wreck.

One morning, towards ten o'clock, whilst I was engaged in my duties as chancellor, at the audience of the court of appeal, a message came from my house, requesting my immediate presence, for my eldest son, Pietro, had been taken with a sudden attack of illness. A strange dread crept over me ; but as I could not quit the audience without causing the close of the court, and the discontinuing of the legal affairs, I was obliged to endure a terrible mental anguish till the hour of three, P. M. Hurrying home I found desolation. My mother, sister, and brothers were buried in consternation and grief ; my wife was in a state of distraction. My boy was a corpse !

Oh how excruciating was the agony of that afflicted mother ! In the intervals of her paroxysms, she wound her arms around my neck, and with quivering tones she ejaculated : " Oh, Alfio—oh husband—my boy !"

The thrilling anguish of those tones I cannot describe, and can never forget. They reminded me of the necessity of recruiting my fortitude, in order to play the part of the consoler, whilst I had need myself of being consoled.

Three months had passed since that fatal event, when one morning I was called in haste to the house of bishop D. On arriving there I found the household in confusion. The bishop was lying on his couch with his eyes closed and his palms joined in the act of prayer. Half a dozen relatives, together with the monk, father Carmelo, were present and sat around the room with gloomy faces, and arms crossed on their chests. The solemn wax taper, used in the moments of dying, was burning ominously on a small table beside his pillow. A mournful silence reigned there. I took a seat at the foot of the bed. On



opening his eyes, his glance fell at first on me. With an angelic smile, he beckoned me to draw near him.

“What ails you, Monsignore?” I asked in a voice that betrayed my agitation and misgivings.

With his usual calm and pleasant countenance, he articulated in a whisper, but solemnly and distinctly :

“It is natural dissolution, my dear Alfio. I wish that you would close my eyes.”

“No! You will not leave us so soon!” I exclaimed in an under tone.

He looked at me with an inexpressible sweetness, and said :

“Death is but a thought.”

Those were his last words. By this time, the inmates of the house had all gathered at the entrance of the room. With a slight gesture of the head, Monsignore expressed his wish, for all to approach his bed, in order to give the parting farewell.

One after another we kissed his hand, with that veneration that no bishopric nor popedom can inspire, but the presence of the righteous, of the sainted man, who is going to meet in blessedness his Supreme Maker.

Every one knelt. With an effort he raised the two first fingers of his right hand and gave us the blessing. Then, with a movement of his eyes, he pointed to father Carmelo a book of hymns, which lay on the table. The monk took the book, and opening where there was a mark, began to read slowly and solemnly—the soul going to Christ,—in which we all joined. The dying man composed himself in the same position I found him when I entered. His face was as white as marble, animated only by a slight purple tinge on the cheeks; his white hair lying in curls on the pillow. His physiognomy was calm and undisturbed; his eyes radiant, looking upwards, without the slightest tremor on the lids. I was leaning on the cushion of a sofa, with my hands covering my face, and every word I repeated transported my imagination to the higher spheres, to



the regions of blessedness, where it seemed to witness the happy meeting of a pure soul with its maker. The moment was awful, grand, supreme, holy !

I was interrupted in my meditation, by the solemn sepulchral sound of the words uttered by father Carmelo :

“ Bishop D. has gone to his Creator ! Let us praise and glorify him ; and pray him to bestow upon us the goodness he had imparted to his servant, who has just departed—Amen ! ”

I rose to my feet, and there lay the clay of my dear, sympathising paternal friend ; always so ready in his loving teaching, always so ready in any trial or affliction, to give me counsel and comfort ! He underwent no struggle ; no change was observed in his physiognomy. He died as he had lived. With awe and veneration I approached him, pressed down the cold eye lids, placed my fore-finger on the melted wax, and sealed the lashes with it.—Thus I fulfilled the legacy he had a few minutes before bequeathed me.—I closed his eyes.

Exalted by religious feelings, I did not realize at that instant the loss I had suffered in his death. But alas ! I could not then see the black clouds which were gathering a fierce tempest on the horizon of my life ! When dark and despairing thoughts afterward swept through my mind, oh, how I mourned the loss of my noble guide and just counsellor, whose body lay in the dark remorseless grave !

A few weeks had passed after this mournful event when Mr. de Tourville returned from a tour in Sicily.

One evening whilst I was in the gloomiest humor, he made his appearance, fretting and fuming at the cold reception he had experienced from the liberals of the towns he had visited ; and my sulky humor incensed him to the utmost.

“ I have come to bid you farewell, for ever,” he said in a surly tone.

“ Why ? ” I asked with surprise. “ Did you accomplish your mission.



“Mission !” he repeated, curling his lips in scorn, “Mission ! It is throwing pearls before swine ! Your countrymen, with very few exceptions, lick their chains, and sleep soundly on them. My companions discouraged my coming here on the humanitarian errand. They said :—the Sicilians are unfit for liberty ; they have never been a brave people, and will never find friends,—I would not believe them and have come here on a fool’s errand.”

This beautiful speech, which, in ordinary times, would have gained from me only a contemptuous smile, a gloomy and irritable humor, heated my blood, and prompted me to answer in the following manner :

“Although you are repeating the words of others, and have the kindness to allow a few exceptions, you are speaking slanders against the Sicilians to a Sicilian, and it behooves me to take the matter in the name of my people, and beg of you to tell those who said the words, that they lie, either through ignorance or malice.” At these words he made a gesture of impatience, but I waved my hand, imperatively, to be allowed to finish.

“I will not speak to you, sir, of those remote periods, when on the continent of Europe, humanity was pining in the rude depths of the forests, and the Druidical altars were stained with blood ; while in this Island, the strength of arms and of diplomacy was employed, neither for the conquest of a town, nor the destruction of a rival power, nor to chain a people, and found the dominations of a family, but to demand in behalf of the human family the cessation of bloody sacrifices.

“It was the Sicilians who, led by Ruggiero, fought against the powerful pope Onorio II, and liberated Puglio and Calabria from his yoke. Sicilians, were those who defeated the Emperor Lotario, called to his assistance by pope Innocenzo II, and who finished by making the pope a prisoner. It were they who tamed the Emperor of the east, carrying the war to his



own doors, and destroying his fleet ; and who six years after, took Tunis and other cities in Africa. Pope Adriano IV. called the Greek Emperor again to his aid, and again he was defeated by Sicilian valor, with the destruction of his fleet ; and twice again they destroyed the fleets of the emperor of Morocco on the high seas. Who but Sicilians went to succor the Christians of Tiro, besieged by the proud Saladin, and forced him to raise the siege ? My countrymen destroyed on the sea of Castellamore the numerous fleet of the emperor of Germany, Henry VI. Then the pope interfered and they accepted Henry as a King : but the German troops having become insolent and tyrannical were all slaughtered.

“No foreign Nation ever conquered Sicily in opposition to the will of the united people. Pope Urbano VI. induced the Sicilians to accept Charles of Aiyoa as a King, but the insolence, effrontery and tyranny of the French, having surpassed the limits of endurance, you know what was the end. And the great power of that tyrant, by sea and by land, employed for many years, to recover possession of the Island, proved of no avail, but met with a succession of defeats.

“And finally, the man who broke sceptres as if they were twigs ; the man whose first breath was Italian air, and whose first words were lisped in the Italian tongue could never, at the head of the French phalanx, fasten his rapacious talons on this Island, for the sole reason, that the people would not have him. With sacrilegious hand, he stripped his mother land of her best ornaments ; and parricide like, he betrayed Venice, and sold it to the vulture of Austria ! Oh, how many tears has it cost the Italians ; and how much blood must be shed to redeem it from foreign tyranny !

“Time will come, I trust in God, that the Sicilian will show with the eloquence of deeds, the mendacity of those words, and leave the calumniators confounded ! And you, Mr. de Tourville, you a patriot, and the son of a patriot, you who pro-



claim a general brotherhood. You turn the fratricidal weapon of slander, against a people, who are ready to perish in the cause of liberty, because forsooth, you find those who having been made the victims of a system of espionage, too cautious to trust a man on first appearance.

“If a man offends me, I am always ready to pardon him; but strong in my principles of national honor and dignity, I cannot leave unanswered who ever attempts to calumniate my country!”

Mr. de Tourville remained for awhile abashed and speechless.

I then commenced a conversation on indifferent subjects which lasted a few minutes. He then made his adieux and departed. I never saw him again.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### A DISCOVERY.

BEFORE proceeding to relate one of the most trying events of my life, it is necessary that I introduce the personages who played a conspicuous part in it.

After my marriage with Eleonora, when setting up house for myself, I was so fortunate as to find a widow named Caterina, of genteel appearance, some five and fifty years of age, who took the superintendence of my housekeeping. She had been educated in a convent, and was a competent hand for cooking and pastries. Besides, she was a very religious woman, and went to confession once a week. This woman had a son and a daughter. The first, a cabinet maker, was one of those wretched beings, first contaminated and then haunted by



the police ; a persecution, from which only a permanent employment, in a respectable house, could save him.

The tears of his mother, and the entreaties of my affectionate wife, induced me to see him. He was a young man of five and twenty ; short and strongly built, with a sallow complexion, flat nose and face, and curly black hair. He never looked you in the face, or if he did, he displayed a treacherous glance. On my first seeing him, a feeling of repulsion and misgiving chilled my blood, and prompted me to send him off. Still my reforming mania, made bolder by the full success I had had with Pietro, caused me to employ him as a valet

The daughter, a girl of eighteen, had also an ugly face, but her countenance was modest, gentle, and trust inspiring. She was a first rate lady's maid. Ill treated by several ladies, she finally found a quiet home at my house, for which favor she was always grateful to me. Saverio was the name of the brother, and the sister bore that of Lisetta.

The 25th day of August, 1846, proved to be very warm and sultry. A feeling of gloom and despondency took possession of me, which brought with it a species of misgiving of an inexplicable character.

After sunset I asked my wife to go with me to the *Marina*, but she meekly declined the invitation, adducing that she was not sufficiently recovered from her last confinement, which had taken place one month before. So I went alone, dragging myself along, in a gloomier state of mind than ever.

The Marina of Palermo is a place of general resort for enjoyment, in the summer season. The north-eastern walls of the city, run from the bay of Castellamare, for half a mile, in a straight line, surmounted with palaces, leaving a belt of shore some five hundred yards wide. This shore is arranged in the following manner. A *pas seggiata*, or promenade, paved with white marble squares and elevated one foot higher than the ground, led along the sea-side, with a line of marble seats,



which serve, at the same time, as a protection against falling into the water. Next comes the carriage ground, some three hundred yards in breadth, which ends with a file of colossal marble statues, of all the Bourbon dynasty, and with two lines of shade trees, making an avenue for equestrians. In the hottest hours of the summer days, this avenue, cooled by the fresh sea-breeze, is a most enchanting place of resort. At the end, along the walls, the ground rises again and is shaded by another line of trees and adorned by stone seats. This is the place of resort for monks, children, and all those who do not care, or cannot afford to make a display.

In the walls there are several places, where water melons, *Ficki d' India*, ice creams, shell fishes, and other refreshments are sold. In the centre of the Marina there is a marble building in the form of an ancient temple, in which a large orchestra play on summer evenings. This building is artistically constructed, so as to convey the sound of the music, from one end of the Marina to the other.

I arrived there when the orchestra was playing the first piece. A large number of carriages, of every kind, from the hack to the turnout, were gathered in a group, near the music ; and not a whisper was heard in the whole expanse. On the promenade ground, the people, in full toilet, were standing, noiselessly drinking in the delightful strains of music, and inhaling the fresh and gentle breeze which blew at short intervals from the sea.

I sat on a spot in front of the music. The night was beautiful. It was one of those nights in which everything seems to be in repose. The canopy of heaven was blue and sparkling ; the sound of the tranquil sea rolling against the embankment, where I was sitting, seemed like sighs, and harmonized well with my gloomy frame of mind. Several pleasure boats, with lamps of different colors, were here and there scattered, moving with leisurely oar strokes near the shore, enhancing the



beauty of the scene. As the music stopped playing, the cries of ice water, melon, and sugar plum venders; the noise of starting carriages; the humming of a thousand voices and a simultaneous, universal movement changed the scene. A crowd of both sexes elegantly dressed and of polite bearing, began to walk to and fro. The most of the ladies wore no hats. Brunettes, with sparkling black eyes and rosy cheeks, blondes with blue eyes and pale sentimental faces, accompanied by husbands, papas and mamas, were fleeting before my eyes, and disappearing as if by enchantment. Now the light shone for a moment on a beautiful brunette with rich, raven hair gracefully braided upon her head, and decorated with flowers. A fair face came after, wearing the charm of a sentimental pallor, with liquid blue eyes, and brown tresses hanging upon a snowy bosom. Then an old gentleman, having a homely damsel on his arm, who wore on her face the morose look of a rather mature maiden without a suitor. Graceful figures, and commanding forms, with a variety of expressions, were all passing and fleeting. I could descry each for a moment, as the gas light shone upon them; the next moment they were blended with the crowd. Young men of every rank, and in full toilet, strode along, availing themselves of the opportunity of the light, to give side glances at the ladies. Here came a beauty speaking in a loud, melodious voice, all kind of pretty nonsense to the ear of her papa; whilst her words were eagerly drank in by an admiring youth, who was walking behind, with a countenance radiant with admiration and love. Brilliant, elegant, and gay young men, passed along, exercising their wits aloud on indifferent subjects, knowing that the beloved objects were within hearing.

How many faces turned pale, how many blushes, smiles, and frowns, the momentary glittering of a lamp light caused! How many spiced remarks and sprinkles of irony, uttered as jokes, were intended for the ears of a tyrannical beauty!



In a word, sitting near a lamp, one could observe a kaleidoscopic medley of countenances and physiognomies denoting different passions, feelings, and sentiments.

Tired of this gay scene, so ill adapted to my humor, I crossed the space destined for the carriages and went through to the avenue used in the day for equestrians, but which in the evenings was full of chairs to be hired on the spot, just behind the music temple. There the society was of a different caste. All were sitting on rows of hired chairs, the most of them eating roasted horse-beans, or chick-pease, or squash seeds. The sellers of those articles were stationed at different points, with their baskets on the ground, and a light covered with colored papers.

I walked slowly on until I reached a place where few persons walked. This suited my humor. As I was going to take my seat on a stone bench, I felt a hand touching my shoulder. Turning round I saw the severe face of father Carmelo, who was distinguished in secular garments.

After the death of bishop D., I had been several times at his convent, and our acquaintance had already ripened into intimacy. He was naturally serious, but his conversation was delightful, for its learning, ready wit, and absence of bigotry. With this companion I began to walk slowly on, arm in arm. When we were at some distance from the music I heard my name uttered by several gay young men who were walking before us and talking aloud. I drew my companion along, in order to listen better to their conversation, and—terrible moment!—I heard what fell upon me like a stroke of lightning! I did not speak, because my tongue was paralyzed; but as I gave a spring forward, father Carmelo seized my arm as with a vice, hissing the words: “Be a man, and trust entirely to me!”

As we were near the gate called *Porta dei Greci*, my friend pulled me in. When we were in the middle of the large square



within, where there was not a solitary soul, Father Carmelo stopped and said to me, in a severe tone : " Do you think what you were going to do was wise ? You would have made of yourself a laughing stock, and precluded all ways of enlightenment ! "

" But, this is the darkest calumny ever whispered," I answered, excitedly.

" These are not affairs to be treated lightly, and in a public street," he continued. " Come to the convent, to-morrow afternoon, and we will speak of the plan to be adopted, in order to clear the truth or to expose the calumny. But, beware, secrecy is the word, if you would succeed ! A single utterance, a hint, will ruin all ! Try to forget what has happened. Go home as tranquil as usual, and to-morrow we shall speak of it with calmer heads. "

A dreadful coincidence which befell me in the night came very near ruining me soul and body. I passed an appalling sleepless and restless night, tossing and turning in the bed, and moaning for daylight. When my mind was wearied by the excitement of the conflicting thoughts, it fell into a state of perfect inanity. Ideas remained dormant, and an incubus took possession of my heart.

Towards dawn, Eleonora began to utter some incoherent words. She was a somniloquist. A few minutes after, she said, with a sigh—" My dear Cuchillo ! " Stunned by the shock of the sudden revelation, I remained for a moment petrified ; feeling my blood all concentrating in the heart, and then rushing with vehemence to the head. With the fury of a tiger I snatched a weapon from the wall ; and I should have unconsciously perpetrated a horrible crime, if the wailing of the newborn babe had not at that moment shaken and awakened me to human and Christian sentiments.

With an effort I jumped out of the bed, and went into another room to bathe my head in cold water. When that furious



paroxysm was over, I returned to the bed-room, and found all quiet, the mother sleeping with the baby resting on her bosom.

In seven years, never had my faith in her love faltered or failed. My ears were used to drink in her vows of affection; and now, at the sight of that calm sleep, I could not credit that her heart was not true.

"May be it is my imagination," I thought; "what could have induced her to be false to me? Should not a blush of falsehood always burn on her cheeks? What is rank, position, wealth, if it is not accompanied by freedom from self-condemnation? Oh, no! I am unjust!"

With these thoughts I calmed myself. But, as the seed of distrust, which was destined to germinate and grow strong and bitter, had already been sown in my heart, I determined not to show in the least what was passing within me. To act otherwise, would serve to put the parties on their guard, if guilty; if not (as I earnestly believed and ardently wished), how could we any more be happy, with the recollections of, and reflections upon my mistrust dwelling in her mind!

In the afternoon I went to Father Carmelo, to whom I related, reluctantly and with a faltering voice, the words uttered by Eleonora in her dream, which coincided with what we had heard on the Marina.

The father remained, for a few moments, pensive, with his hand placed over his eyes; then raising them to me gloomily, and with a voice that betrayed his feelings, he said interrogatively but earnestly:

"If you were endowed with firmness, and so strong a manly character as to crush down and reign over your heart, I would deem it the proper time to unveil your eyes and fulfil the commission that good Bishop D. left me."

At those words I felt myself sinking at once into a hopeless state of mind; but soon my sensitive pride stirred within me. I paced the room several times; then, in a voice scarcely articu-



late from the tumult raging within my breast, I said : " Speak, sir ! I know how to bear misfortune."

" Slander, my good friend," he began, " is unperceived in its origin ; it quickly multiplies itself unnoticed by the person attacked, who only becomes aware of it when it is impossible to destroy it. Such is your position. The words of those young men last night were nothing but the exuberance of the evil. The good bishop knew it, and was afraid of its denouement. Even a relative or a true friend shrinks from the idea of being the denouncer ; especially as it wounds the tenderest part of man's feelings—honor. It is true that one's honor does not depend on the actions of another ; but still, it is a fruit by which poor human nature sets great stores, and whose sweetness or bitterness depends much on the common belief."

" In such circumstances, when such an affair has become the subject of every-day conversation, people reason in this way : Is it possible that Mr. B. knows nothing of it ? Why, even the very air is laden with it. Experience teaches that an overwhelming love, or vile interest, causes a man to endure dishonor ; but Mr. B., although doting on his family, is a man of high character, and his position is such as not to prevent the supposition that the sacrifice of the richest jewel of life, of a thing so sacred in its nature, has formed part in the calculation of the means to satisfy the cravings of avarice. Who knows ? May be he is a fool, or a rogue. These are the general surmises. And, as the conclusion is drawn in accordance with the character and sentiments of the surmiser, the good people pity the person spoken of, and the bad ones sneer at him.

" This is your position. I do not infer that your wife is guilty ; nay, I believe it a vile calumny.

" Now let us see what are the means to extricate yourself, if possible, from such a state of appalling uncertainty, and come out of it triumphantly. Now that the clew is in your hand, you may easily find out the end of this labyrinth, by firm-



ness and persevering watchfulness But to achieve this, you have to undergo one of the most severe trials that can be inflicted on human nature, viz : you must needs continue your usual manners and behavior, and be always on your guard not to fall, either in the utterance of the lightest sarcasm, or in forced or affected demonstrations of love. If you follow my instructions literally, the triumph is, with a certainty, yours. This is enough for to-day. If new things happen, trust not to your feverish mind, but come to me."

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A LETTER

ALESSIO CUCHILLO belonged to a very respectable but poor family ; he was employed, at a small salary, in the office of the secretary of the chief of police, was a man of six and twenty years of age, small and slim, with very light hair, thin mustache, and still thinner beard. His sunken eyes were blue and small, and his lips narrow and colorless. His nose was straight and pointed ; his brow low and wrinkled. His manners were calm, pleasant and gentlemanly.

This young man had been introduced to me about six years before the epoch of which I am speaking. Although I felt an irrepressible dislike for him, I treated him with civility ; but he did not, apparently, take advantage of my kindness, for he came to visit me only twice or thrice in a year.

This introduction, and these rare and ceremonious visits had been part of the fiendishly concocted plan to destroy my happiness for ever.

My situation was indeed appalling. It would be impossible to describe the storm of outraged love and pride, of grief and



jealousy, that raged in my bosom. Feeling intensely and resentfully the received wrong, I determined to make my wife feel the power of the man, whose affections she had slighted, whose honor had been ruthlessly, insultingly trampled in the dust; and wild impulses—suggestions of the fiend—flashed, lightning-like, athwart my mind. Anon, love arose, and with it, doubt of the imputation, the instinct of the husband, and the inspiration of the Christian. Sometimes I knelt, and, raising my mind to the Almighty, I prayed for her. Oh, how fervent, how frantic, how heart-rending were my prayers!

“She might love that man,” I thought; “but innocently and harmlessly, just as well as I loved Adelina.”

I could not entirely believe that she was faithless. How often slander tarnishes fair fame! How often this very slander springs from feelings of revenge against a spotless person! I thought it impossible, that such a lovely being, who professed so much love, and showed such infatuation for her husband, could be false.

I resolved to spare no time, no pains, no money in the search of the truth. I ardently wished her purity to be made manifest.

“Here,” I soliloquised, “in this breast she shall find a hold against calumny, and in my cherishing love, the reward of her faithfulness!”

Thus passed the days. The nights were more dreadful. Under pretension that the baby did not allow me sleep, I chose a single bedroom for myself to rest—to rest?—no! Rest had entirely forsaken me: clasping my burning brow, rolling and tossing in the bed, fevered by anxieties, tortured by fears, oppressed by phantoms, and with the blended feelings of wounded pride, love, regret, hope, and fear struggling in my soul; slowly—slowly passed the interminable nights. I had already set spies around my house and another’s, to watch the movements of the parties. One day, walking about the city, I



passed before the house I had first inhabited when I married. An old crone, whom I had benefitted, by giving her food and a spare room in the entry, was sitting before the door.

The sight of the dwelling which was once for me the abode of happiness, made me fall into a reverie ; I remained standing, with my arms folded and my head raised. The old woman startled me with her shrill voice, saying :

“ Oh, excellenza, how I have longed to see you ! Would you do me the favor to step into my room, for I must speak of things interesting to you.”

Astonished, I complied ; already a misgiving had taken possession of me. I sat on a rickety chair, leaving her to accommodate herself on her bed of straw. In this position she raised her skeleton hands, and pressed back her grey, straggling hair. Then looking at me with the intensity of sorrow and sympathy, she exclaimed :

“ Oh, how I have longed to see you ! I am sinking fast, and I felt that I could not die without unburdening my conscience of a sin of ingratitude, and obtaining your pardon.”

From her revelations, made in a long and tedious manner, I learned that my doubts were realities, which had taken place since the first week of my marriage, and had continued up to the present time ; that a conspiracy was always on foot to devise such means as would prevent my discovering anything ; that the members of this clique were my mother-in-law, the housekeeper, Caterina, and her son Saverio ; that the daughter, Lisetta, shrank from it, but need caused her to be silent, and that the speaker was an abettor in the transaction.

From those revelations, I knew the worst that had befallen me, and got possession of the thread of the conspiracy. A storm was raised within my bosom, which, however, lasted but a few moments. As every doubt was dispersed, I felt in that calm state of mind caused by utter hopelessness, and my resolution was bent in the direction of a painful and perhaps



fatal task—a wretched and distressful task—without the least equivalent in good.

On the same evening, captain Mazzarielli came with a carriage to take his daughter to the marina. The valet went with them. An internal whisper—something like a presentiment—told me to search the house.

Going round, I found the children asleep, and Caterina in a chair keeping them company. Lisetta was in another room mending laces, and so deep was her application to her work, that she did not hear me crossing the room. I looked all about the house, not knowing why, and without any definite object. Then I began to search all my wife's drawers, cautiously, and without displacing the objects within them. Having examined every article in the drawers, my eyes fell on the work table. I tried the little drawer, and it proved to be locked. This was unusual—she never locked it. I sat on a chair and looked wistfully at it, murmuring—“locked—I wish I could see what is in there—I will try.” I took the bunch of keys, but no one fitted. I ransacked the house for others, but none were suitable. Finally, my sight fell on a pistol box and I drew the key from it, with a presentiment of success.

As chance would have it, I opened it. Spools, scissors, needle cases, thimbles, and a white cambric handkerchief crumpled up, were the objects presented to my sight. I fumbled my hand in them, but met with nothing remarkable. In shaking the handkerchief I saw one corner of it tied into a knot. Untying it, a quantity of small fragments of written paper flew out.

The sight of those fragments caused me a thrill like the touch of a lightning conductor, and cold beads of perspiration dropped from my brow.

Carefully I gathered them all, went into the library, and secreted them in a safe place. Then I tore a sheet of written paper into fragments as small as those I had subtracted,



crumpled them with my hand, tied them into the same corner of the handkerchief, and replacing it, relocked the drawer.

I sat in my library, sad and oppressed with grief, with my eyes fixed on the spot. It was the small drawer where I had secreted the bits of paper. Although favored by the sense of the deep injury received, I felt as ashamed of my action, as if I had committed a crime. Conscience whispered that I had no right to do it; but resentment and pride, with their loud voices, drowned the murmuring of conscience saying—it is a ruse of war.

Whilst so musing, an idea flashed into my mind. Slowly I went to the nursery and found the children sleeping, with Caterina still beside them. Then I passed into the next room, and with a well assumed calmness, I whispered to Lisetta, “Come to the library, I want to speak to you.” The girl looked at me with an inquiring glance, and followed.

When in the library I took my seat in the arm chair, caused her to be seated opposite to me, near the table, and fixed on her a steady, penetrating glance, with a countenance as stern as I could assume.

The poor girl first looked at me frightened, and then began to tremble like an aspen.

A few minutes had passed in this manner, when I broke the silence, saying, in a stern, terrible voice: “Lisetta——.”

With broken accents, in a frightened manner, intermingled with sobs, she interrupted me, clasping her hands:

“Sir, I know nothing! Oh, sir, I do not know anything of it!”

I looked at her for a little while, then said in a calm and assuring manner:

“You are a foolish girl, Lisetta. Your fright and negative answer, without knowing my question, or whether even I was going to make any, accuses you of falsehood. Now that I perceive that we understand each other, I tell you that I know



everything, and that I do not need any information from you ; I only intend to show you the position in which you are, and the way of clearing yourself. One of these days this affair will be of public account, and you being deemed an assistant in the transaction, will find your character blasted, and will be condemned to wretchedness and beggary. One word from me may save you."

"Oh, save me, save me," she exclaimed, with tears in her eyes. "I am innocent, I call God to witness!"

"But how can I know," retorted I, superciliously, in an insinuating manner, "if you are innocent, except that you give me undeniable proofs."

"I will tell you everything, and watch for you, and be secret. Will that suffice you?"

"As for the past," I answered with a careless air, "I do not require any information ; I accept the latter services, and to try your sincerity, I will ask you how often the epistolary correspondence is carried on?"

She did not perceive, that without pronouncing any name, and without speaking definitely of any subject, I was cross-examining her, and subtly drawing from her what I did not know.

"Once or twice a week," she answered, "and every Sunday without exception."

"You must try to let me find the letters," I said.

"It is impossible," she answered, "because she destroys them as soon as she has read them."

"Well, you must set all your womanly shrewdness to work ; but beware not to be found out."

Then placing my fore-finger across my lips, I said : "You may retire."

At twelve o'clock my wife came home in the best humer, overwhelming me with caresses.

After supper we retired, but instead of going to my bed



room, I locked myself in the library, and began the work of joining the fragments of paper.

By morning I succeeded in uniting them with gummed paper so perfectly that the document could be read as if the paper had not been torn. The contents of the letter—for it was a letter—were not written in the style of a man of the world, but of a school boy, compromising the writer, the one addressed, and the secret of the affair itself. I began to make a record of proofs, as they came to my knowledge. Little by little, I learned that Lisetta was the most interesting witness of the case. Whole months I passed in this wretched situation; appetite forsook me, and the tempting pillow rarely lured me to sleep. My house to me was desolate and dull. That house which was once the abode of happiness, and to which I was so eager to return when my business was over, had now become the place of torture; a hell of fire. And paternity!—Oh, how a look at those innocent little beings pierced my heart like a poisoned dart! Poor innocent creatures! Their mother had trained them to fear me, lest if they were familiar with me, they should tell tales. Poor children! I loved them more than, and gathering them in my arms, hot tears fell from my eyes. That sublime sentiment of paternity, which once embowered my life with the sweet of roses, was now wounded by the thorns of the withered bush. Still my heart felt for them; for humanizing sentiments and the teachings of our Savior in regard to children, were great advocates in their behalf, and I loved, yes, I loved them. But the greatest trial for me was: that whilst the passions of wounded love, outraged pride, gnawing jealousy, fierce anger, and burning desire of revenge worked on my impetuous spirit, I had to appear as calm and cheerful as usual. To stand firm in the midst of so much desolation, I evoked all the strength of my resolution, backed by the conscientious desire of vindicating the honor of an unstained name.



But what was my plan ? What did I intend to do ? I did not know myself !

The time came at last, when the overcharged machine had to explode. It was a beautiful Christmas morning ; the day for giving presents. Eleonora came into my room handsomely dressed, with a radiant face, and in a petting manner asked me for a present.

“ What do you desire ? ” I asked.

“ A new black silk dress.”

“ Are you preparing the mourning for the loss of your husband ? ” I said in a careless tone.

“ Why, you always think of death, my darling,” she said in a peevish manner.

“ As good Christians,” I replied, “ we should often think of it.”

Opening a drawer I counted her the money required, in the best humor I could assume ; for which I received a caress on my cheek, making me feel as if stung by a viper.

Whilst I was completing my toilet, Lisetta came in, placed a little strip of paper on the table, and noiselessly slipped away. It ran as follows—“ My mother has just brought in a note which is locked up. If she has no chance of reading it you may find it.”—

I had finished my toilet to accompany Eleonora to her father’s, because we had been invited there to dine. So I followed her hurrying our departure. I could read in her face the vexation my attendance caused her. She began to play all kinds of tricks to detach herself from me, but could not succeed. Finally we started.

At the dinner-table Captain Muzzarielli complained of my want of appetite.

“ I think Alfio is in love,” interrupted Eleonora ; “ he has lost his appetite for these three months past.”

“ I am in love with you,” said I, passing an arm over her



shoulder. Then turning to Mrs. Muzzarielli : " Have I not a beautiful wife to be in love with ? "

' Beautiful and good : you do not deserve such a wife ! ' exclaimed the lady, whose face had already turned scarlet through the free potations she had been taking.

" Why ? " I asked, in an assumed plaintive tone " Have I not loved, cherished, respected her, as much as human nature permits ? Is there any fashion, pleasure or enjoyment that she is not the first to share ? "

" Oh, " exclaimed the captain, piously ; " thank the Madonna, I am a happy father on this account. "

Turning again to my wife, I said, in a slow measured tone :

" You will weep, oh how bitterly you will weep, when you lose your husband ! "

Her face turned purple, her eyes glared, and in a tone of consternation that might have been taken for the effect of love, she said :

" Why do you speak in this manner ? "

" Am I not older than you ? " I replied, simply.

After dinner I rushed home alone. I found Lisetta there alone, because even the children had been conveyed to Muzzarielli's. With the same key I had used on the former occasion I opened the little drawer, and there I found a note. As I finished reading it and placed it in my pocket, I felt an iron hand press my skull—my ire became rage, grief changed into despair, something like a veil covered my eyes, the blood rushed to my head, and I saw every thing red—red, the color of blood. Raging like a wild beast, I went into my room, took a broad-sword and began to make execution on every thing belonging to her. First came a large oil portrait, and I cut it to pieces. The sewing-table, her wardrobe, dresses, bonnets, shawls, laces, even the very chairs on which she was used to sit, were chopped and split into pieces. In the meanwhile, Caterina was bringing two of the children home ; but her



daughter at the head of the stairs, frightened nearly to death, said to her mother : " Fly, for pity's sake ! Fly ! The master found a note which must be something terrible, and he is become crazy, and is breaking every thing with a sword !"

Like a famished hyena I roamed through every corner of the house, to seek and destroy even the most insignificant objects belonging to her. Then, frantically, I put on my hat and cloak, buckled my sword, and rushed out of the house with the fire of vengeance burning in my soul.

What was I going to do ? I do not know ; but my feet took me straightway to the house of Muzzarielli.

It was near dusk, and I was already in sight of the place of my involuntary destination, when I felt a hand grasping my arm, and heard the word, " Where to, in such a fury ?"

It was Father Carmelo, or I should rather say, it was the Angel of Providence. I stared at him with a blank look, and grinding my teeth I hissed, " I am going to kill her !"

The monk seized my arm and gave it a jerk, nearly breaking it.

" Man, boy !" he thundered ; " are you mad ? Will you spoil your career, lose your liberty, on account of a despicable object ? Come ! you shall go to the convent with me to-night."

This interruption recalled me to my senses. The only words I could say were, " I will go to my mother."

My friend tried to elicit from me some words by which he could understand what had befallen me ; but I shook all over with nervous excitement, and could not utter a word. When we arrived at my mother's house I rushed into an inner room, whilst Father Carmelo whispered a few words to my mother and retired.

Oh, how balsamic are a mother's tears to the heart of an afflicted son ! My mother and sister rushed into the room, where I was almost smothered by grief ; they both began pet-



ting, caressing and kissing me, with the interrupted exclamations—My sweet, sweet brother!—My dear, unfortunate child!—Oh, how much I have dreaded this moment! These and other tender expressions melted the ice which had encrusted my feelings, and I found utterance with the words: “Oh, mother, mother! If I had been a bad, selfish man, I should have deserved my fate, and, perhaps, not felt so bitterly—but—mother—how pure has been my love! How fond I have been of that object who bears my name, but does not deserve it! Oh, mother, this cruel blow will dethrone my reason!”

“My son, all things work together for good, says the scriptures. Let us thank God for what he ordains in his infinite wisdom.”

At those words a dreadful vision flashed through my mind. I rose up with my hair standing on end, as if I were seeing a mutilated body, and with a hollow voice I exclaimed: “You are right, mother. I have not thought of God for these four long months, and He, in his mercy, sent me an angel in the very moment of need! Oh, horror! horror! By this time I should have involuntarily committed a murder! Ah, mother, let us kneel and thank and glorify God.” That night I slept.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A TRIAL.

My mind was a chaos. I knew not what to do. Eleonora, warned by Caterina, had remained with her children at her father's. The next day I sent Lisetta to take service with my brother's wife, the daughter of General R. My house, which I once believed to be the spot where love, hope, and trust, reigned supreme, and which bitter disappointment had made a pandemonium, it was impossible for me to dwell in any longer. In order not to retain any external vestige of my wife, I sold, for a trifle, all my furniture ; and returned to live with my dear mother, sister and brothers. The angel of desolation had visited my heart, and left there nothing but burning and smoking ruins !

" Now what do you intend to do ? It is better to forget all. Time will cure you," said father Carmelo to me, three days after the event.

I looked at him sternly and with a slight curl on my lips. Slowly I drew from my pocket a small bundle of papers and placing them in his hand said, " Read, sir."

Now and then, whilst perusing the papers, he raised his eyes to me, opened wide with wonder. When he had finished reading, he slowly tied them up and handed them to me, saying : " The proofs are plain, and not to be easily contradicted. The law in those matters requires such evidence as no one has ever succeeded in producing ; but, it seems to me, that yours is overwhelming. You must be careful about Lisetta, she is the main witness—and the last note ! . . . wretches !



By this I perceive that you intend to apply for redress to the law of the country. This is the noblest course you can take. But before commencing, meditate upon the powerful position of your adversaries, and whether you can cope with them. Then discard all other thoughts, and think only of your serious position, and employ your energies to overcome successfully the difficulties and the dangers that await you."

Enabled now to think uninterruptedly I tried to realise my position.

My fixed determination was to bring the guilty parties to a trial. As the knowledge of my wrongs had been public for years, so public I wished to be the punishment of the guilty, and the redemption of my honor.

All the difficulties and dangers attendant on the trial, on account of the influence Captain Mazzarielli exercised amongst the highest in the community, paraded themselves before my eyes, in a discouraging manner; because, being in a land of tyranny, the laws were disregarded and trampled upon, at the pleasure of the powerful. After long meditating, planning and sorrowing, I flung my apprehensions to the wind, and set myself to dare, defy, and conquer the worst that threatened me.

Thus resolved, I commenced examining all the proofs I had in my hands. I saw that there was not a judge who could find grounds for giving a verdict of *not guilty*. Then I began a counter examination, to wit:—Suppose I were their counsellor and attorney, and were so immoral as to find, by false representations, some means of extenuating these proofs? So I put on paper what a lawyer's skill can invent to defend the wrong party, and by the side of each article I placed the names of witnesses who could annihilate that defence.

Then I wrote the act of prosecution, describing all the facts and proofs, adding likewise other facts and a long list of



witnesses, which, although apparently strangers to the main point, served to preclude any attempt at trickery.

Now came the thought—to whom of the judges I should present my claim.

The crime being classified by the law as *correctional*, its examination and decision devolved on the judge of the ward, where it had been perpetrated.

I having inhabited seven different wards in as many years, and the crime being continued during all that time, the choice of the magistrate was at my option.

Pondering upon the lives and habits of those judges, one after another, I saw in them bad characters, and men servile to the high authorities. These were not my men.

Finally I thought of one, who had not the least influence. He was a man from the country, who had begun his career as a judge of the ward, and, on account of his honesty and simplicity, had grown old, without any promotion. To this judge I presented my claims.

Criminal matters are managed very delicately, by the law of my country. The magistrate who is apprized of a crime committed, (provided it be not capital) commences a secret investigation of the affair. Assisted by his chancellor he makes researches and inquiries, sifting and analysing the evidence as best he can. Witnesses are also secretly sworn. If he deems the crime ascertained, he gives out the warrant for the arrest of the accused person; publishes the proofs and assigns the terms for the defence and the public trial. This manner of proceeding, bars to a certain extent, the guilty persons from buying up and subverting the most interesting witnesses of the case; a man who has once sworn in one way at the private examination, cannot contradict himself at the public trial, without endangering himself. The discovery and outbreak of Christmas day, gave occasion to all the busy bodies and gossips to talk, surmise, and guess about the issue of the affair, in



a hundred different ways ; every one concluding according to his own sentiments and feelings. But as eight days passed and my outward demeanor continued calm and unchanged, the babblers had exhausted their chit-chat, and the affair, as an old thing, was sliding into oblivion.

On the morning of the ninth day all was in a stir. Society was shocked as if by an earthquake. News circulated, that Mr. Balzani had applied to the law ; that twenty witnesses had been sworn ; that Mrs. B. and Mr. C. had been bailed ; and that the proofs were such as not to leave the punishment a matter of doubt.

The following day my friend Antonio came to see me. I had not met with him since the marriage of his sister with an officer of the royal navy. Being inclined to consumption, he had spent several years in travelling, to recruit his strength.

"What have you done, Alfio ?" he said to me with great concern. "Every one speaks of you ! All the ladies of high rank, and consequently their husbands, are planning and scheming against you. They swear that they will never endure to see a lady of quality sitting publicly, for judgment, on the malefactor's chair. You know the great influence that captain Muzzarielli exercises among the nobility, the government, the magistrates and the police. There is not a man in office who has not been already influenced against you. If you had heard how several ladies spoke of this affair last night at a *soirée* at the prince of Mangano's. The princess, who is a centre of attraction, declared you ungallant, and grieved for the moment that she made your acquaintance."

"And the baroness, your sister, what does she say ?" I asked in a disgusted manner.

"As for Enrichetta, she says nothing. Muzzarielli being so intimate with the baron and all the family, she has to keep her own feelings to herself."

And now began for me one of the most dreadful ordeals that



a man can be subjected to. First of all the president of the court of appeal, a high magistrate, with whom I was intimately acquainted, asked me, as a favor, threatening at the same time his enmity, to drop the trial. I answered harshly, calling the proposition dishonest and insulting.—Thus I made of him an open enemy.

The chief of police was a man by name of Genouese. He had been the judge who had sat at the trial of the Cholera in Syracuse, in 1837 ; and who, on the entrance of Del Carretto into that place, had caused many individuals to be butchered. For this service he had been suddenly elevated to the office he now occupied.

This man spoke to me on the subject, first in a friendly manner, and then threatening the revengeful power of the police.

Haughtily and contemptuously I answered this man, that he could, abusing his office, make me undergo horrible trials and excruciating ordeals ; but I, trusting to my unimpeachable character, to the justice of my cause, and to the help of the Avenger of all wrongs, dared his threats, and would abide the consequences of his rascality firmly and unflinchingly. Finally, mad with revengeful passion he left me, hissing the words—“ You shall hear from me.”

The same scenes were repeated with the Lieutenant-general of the realm, with the Intendente, and other high officers.

This unequal strife was the great contest of the day among high and low. The impossibility of my success was openly declared ; bets were offered, but no one would take them up for me, convinced, as every one was, that I would at last have to yield, or be crushed. Thus society was openly at war against me ; still they continued to invite me to their parties and to receive me with the kindest expressions—lamentable *dualism* of men in an enslaved country !—The public man, or the man who feared or depended on the government (and who does not ?) had to cross and contradict my proceeding, whilst as an individual, he secretly sympathised with me.



I did not alter my usual course of life—in the mornings at the Court of Appeal, and in the evenings at the opera or in society. My heart was burning, and my mind was always concentrated on one leading thought; still, by force of self-control I dismissed the gloomy looks, consentaneous to my feelings. I tried in social hours to annihilate the sorrow of the past, to turn my glance from the future, and to stand firm on the momentary present.

People, who knowing me well, could fathom the depth of my passions, were astonished at my apparent good humor, and at my playful smiles. It is a legal axiom that *no* lawyer must plead in his own case. Hitherto I had done all myself; but now I began to feel the necessity of finding a counsellor for the approaching trial. As I was widely and intimately acquainted with all the members of the bar, it seemed to me an easy thing to secure one of the eminent lawyers on my side. But, alas! how I deceived myself—all refused!

My friend Ettore took me to his lawyer, a rich, liberal and honest man, who, after a little hesitation, agreed to take up my case. But as spies were set upon me to watch my movements, when I left his house, police officers with messages, and visits of people of rank, poured in and beset him so annoyingly that he was forced to refuse me his assistance. The same thing having befallen me with others, I abandoned the idea of having a counsellor. Only the judge, that venerable old man, stood firm as a rock.

"I wish that this trial was over," he once told me, in a vexed humor. "If you knew, Mr. Balzani, the annoyances I receive at every moment from all quarters; they have even threatened me with dismissal; but I cannot sell my soul. If they have not means to destroy the standing evidence, they must be condemned to four years' imprisonment."

One evening I was sitting in my room, my mind harrassed with meditation on the hollowness of worldly life. People did



not turn their back on me ; their treatment of me was exquisitely delicate ; their smiles as flattering, their grasp as cordial as ever : but their eyes—oh, their eyes spoke volumes ! They said : You are fallen—I pity you ;—why did you put yourself in such a predicament !

Whilst I was giving way to vexation at these mental visions, the form of Pietro, my redeemed valet, quietly appeared at my door.

“ Ah, Pietro ! ” I said, rather displeased with his untimely apparition ; “ do you want any thing ? ”

Nothing,” he answered, in his usual calm way, “ only knowing that you have no valet, I wish to serve you, as in former times.”

“ Why ? ” I asked, with surprise. “ Have you fallen again into bad habits, or failed in your business ? ”

“ Neither, sir. I left my brother to attend to my business, because my place for the present is here, to serve you ”

“ You have the advantage of me, Pietro—will you explain yourself ? ”

“ If you wish it so, sir, I tell you that your life is in danger ; that a plot is on foot, with the connivance of the police, to put you out of the way ; that your late valet, Saverio, has volunteered to be the assassin ; and if by chance you should overpower him, a disguised policeman will be at hand to arrest you. Thus, in either case, you would be out of their way.”

“ How did you manage to learn so much ? ” I inquired, rather perplexed.

“ That is my affair, sir,” he answered ; “ but whilst I accompany you, nobody will dare to touch you.”

Finally the much dreaded moment was near at hand. On the eve of the appointed day for the trial, I went to see the old judge, but—*Quantum mutatus ab illo !*—I found the good man wan and haggard. Shaking in all his limbs, he could scarcely say, in a trembling voice : “ I am sick.” These



three words, uttered in a sepulchral tone, sounded in my heart like the knell of a funeral ; my blood froze, and beads of icy perspiration rolled on my forehead.

Perceiving that his illness was nothing but fright, I began to exhort him about the great act of justice he was going to perform on the morrow.

“ I have delegated another judge,” said he faintly ; “ thus I have placed the case on the conscience of another, and removed from myself an imminent catastrophe.”

The Intendente that very evening had shown him the decree of his dismissal, and the chief of police an order for his arrest for political offences.

The poor old man, finding those arguments too strong to be opposed, made a compromise with his conscience, and gave up the case to the substitute judge—a man sold body and soul to the police.

I went home frantic with despair. I saw in fancy the scorn of fops, open mouthed wonder, supercilious smiles, and the cold shoulders, and averted looks of acquaintances—and my honor, the pupil of my eyes, the inheritance of my father . . . . lost, all lost ! And the time was so short ! Only a few hours ! Whilst I was thus exasperated, an idea flashed into my mind, and I exclaimed : “ all is not lost, I may have some respite !”

The law points out some cases in which one of the parties can refuse a judge. He has only to present a paper in which he states the legal motives of the refusal. This refusal suspends the judgment, until the Supreme Court decides upon its validity. This procedure takes, at least, one month.

On the next day, scarcely had the court opened, before I served the new judge with the refusal. This bold act partly dismayed my adversaries.

Now that I had thirty days before me, I found more leisure to think calmly. In fact, an idea came, and I immediately acted upon it. I wrote a long and minute memorial of all the



facts, and addressed it to the minister of state, for the department of justice, in Naples. By the next mail, an order came to send forthwith the file of the trial Balzani to Naples.

This order took every one by surprise. They had not deemed it necessary to intrigue at the court of the king. Two eminent lawyers started at once for Naples with a bag full of letters, addressed to courtiers and ministers. But, in their scheming, they could not guard against an overruling Providence!

The minister was an old man, impulsive, stubborn, and upright. He had taken a great interest in my case. When the mail reached him, his first step was to present it to the king, draw the resolution, and send it to the mail. So that whilst the lawyers were busying themselves, in making their toilet, presenting letters, and making perorations, the resolution was sailing to Palermo.

By the next steamer the attorney-general received a decree by which the old judge was commanded to assist personally at the public trial, and decide on the case.

The medal was now at once inverted. I turned bold, my adversaries utterly dismayed, all the authorities full of anger, and the old judge as firm as a rock. "Now that the king knows everything," he said, with alacrity, "I no longer fear to administer justice."

Pietro warned me to be cautious, because Saverio, supported by the chief of police, had sworn to kill me, even in the broad light of day.

On the morning of May 11th, 1847, the city of Palermo was in a stir. Every one spoke of the trial of Mrs. B. and Mr. C. From the palace of the lieutenant-general to the hut of the poor, there was no other subject of conversation. In the stores, in the streets, and in the market places, this affair was related as the great event of the day. My friend Giuseppe Nobile came to my house, fulfilling his promise of standing by me. It



was nine o'clock when we reached the court. The hall was crowded with a motley assemblage of all classes. Prominent, at the end of the hall, sat the two culprits.

On our arrival a general murmur was raised. The aspect of the person whom I had so much cherished, and who had made me so miserable and that of her associate in crime, now sitting there as in a pillory, a mark for the mocks and gibes of the rabble, raised in me a storm of anger, of resentment, of torture and agony. I felt my heart-strings in such a tension as though they would snap. Considering that my death would be, at that moment, the triumph of my enemies, I coerced my mind to take a firm hold of life. By dint of a strong, undaunted will, I succeeded in calming myself, and forced my way to the place where the court sat. There I found an imposing number of the best lawyers of the town arrayed on the side of the criminals, whilst only a young man sat by my side, more as a friend than a counsellor. I sighed deeply and bitterly.

"Oh, society!" I muttered mentally, "when tyranny has reduced thee to such an abject state, that crime finds so many advocates, and honor not a single counsellor, virtue must needs turn her eyes sorrowfully from thee, and a dreadful catastrophe must hover above thy head."

But time proved, afterwards, that the Alpine tree had been scorched and withered externally by the blast of the sirocco, but without losing its vitality. Tyranny had not the power to fasten its loathsome and poisoned fangs into the core of the manly souls of our country, to obliterate honesty and virtue.

As I turned my glance towards the haughty woman, I saw a fiendish, revengeful expression in her eyes, and a cold thrill ran through my veins. Her face was pallid, her brow slightly contracted, and her under lip curled. A feeling of pity and sorrow stole over me, such as I had never experienced in my life.

Broken sentences were heard from the motley crowd—how



beautiful she is—still haughty—poor creature—I would die with shame—look at the monkey—ruin herself for such an ape—and so on, when the usher commanded silence, and not a whisper more was heard.

The judge opened the session with the following words :

“ Mr. Alfio Balzani, you stand here in this Court, before man and God, as the denouncer of a crime against society and religion. Your behavior has been hitherto noble and firm ; your honor, as a husband, is secured by what is registered in these papers, and your character has nobly established by the firmness and manly endurance with which you have persevered in bringing the criminals to this fatal moment. You are clothed at this moment with solemn and awful power ; a word from your mouth can at this instant save the prisoners from an ignominious sentence, or bring them to their doom if the evidence contained in the preparatory trial be not disproved. I give you five minutes to reflect ; at the expiration of that time if you say proceed, the public trial will commence, the law will take absolute possession of the case, you will stand here as a mere accuser, and the generous and sublime word—pardon—will become powerless on your lips.”

So saying, the judge crossed his arms and fixed a steady look at the clock. The moment was appalling and solemn ! Not a whisper was heard, and thousands of eager eyes were rivetted on me.

An inexpressible sensation came over me ; a tinkling sound buzzed in my ears, and my faculties of thought vanished. I cannot give an account of what I felt at that moment, for it was superhuman. Oh, my good reader, do not slight the word *Grace* ! It was grace, which descending to my heart, dispersed the thought of vengeance, and made me feel an inexpressible celestial joy ! In my fancy I saw Christ, I saw the Samaritan, I saw the Magdalen, I saw the crucifiers. A pleasant heat bedewed my chilled limbs ; a copious perspira-



tion bathed me from head to foot, and my heart swelled with throbbings.

Cheerfully, joyfully, and with the intoxication of a conquerer, I raised myself up and in sonorous and distinct accents uttered :

“ I regret that I cannot pardon as a citizen, but I pardon as a Christian. Let us here draw a document which legally will estrange us forever. As for the personal offence, I humbly pray the Almighty God that my pardon may reach his throne, and be sanctioned by his merciful blessing !”

The Amen pronounced by the magistrate was followed by a thundering burst of *Viva*, and applause from the audience. This uproar, which lasted some minutes, was mixed with a confusion, caused by a pressing forward of the multitude, a lifting of heads, and a stretching of necks to get a glimpse or better look at me.

Those lawyers who, a moment before, were arrayed to battle me, all at once extended timidly their hands. All countenances were moved, all eyes suffused with tears, the judge's not excepted. The thundering voice of the usher to impose silence in Court was unheeded, nay, unheard. In the meanwhile, the Chancellor had drawn the document of divorce, and that of pardon. My friend Giuseppe, with tears in his eyes, and trembling with excitement, handed me a pen, and I dashed my name on those papers, unable to read them.

My excitement was great ; I felt intoxicated, I felt proud—weakness of human nature, I felt proud of myself ! Finally, when the documents were signed and witnessed by the judge and the lawyers present, I tried to depart. But how to penetrate the thick mass of human bodies, which instead of giving way, thickened towards me and formed an impassable barrier ? At the voice of the usher—give way—I felt myself seized, raised up by the crowd, and slowly carried out by that compact phalanx to the outer door, where I entered my carriage amid the evvivas and hurrahs of the thousands.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### RETRIBUTION.

A MAN of energetic mind can endure adversities, grievances, and discomforts unflinchingly. The state of excitement, and the necessity of the self-imposed task enables him to withstand those physical consequences which are the ordinary attendants upon deep distress. But when the cause of mental agitation ceases, and the need of fortitude is ended, a reaction ensues, and he falls into a state of hopelessness and woe, in a degree proportioned to the power he has before used. The heavier the pressure, the more violent the reaction. The higher the ascension, the deeper the fall.

After the appalling sufferings attending the discovery of my misfortune, after the dreadful ordeal of the trial ; now that my heart beat no more with passions, my self-esteem was satisfied and conscience at rest, a sad despondency settled on my spirit, and my heart sank into dejection. I felt that heavy lethargy of mind, which is the consequence of hopelessness. The aspect of the children tore my heart. Poor innocent little beings, it was for no fault of theirs that they were deprived of the caresses of their mother ! But they fared better for the change, my mother and sister neglected no care to instruct them, and trained them with all the tenderness and affection of maternal devotion.

All those nobles, magistrates and lawyers who had looked at me with lowering faces, and conspired against me, were now all smiles and protestations of friendship. I felt sick at heart



thereat, and remained more convinced of the inconsistency of human nature.

Still my trials had not finished. The Muzzarielli family, when the dread of a disgraceful punishment had ceased to agitate their minds, felt my pardon heavier than the legal infliction, and as I had broken my offensive weapon, they fearlessly determined upon revenge.

One day I received an intimation to appear before the chief of police. This officer had not forgotten my contemptuous expressions, and made the best of the occasion that presented itself, to fulfil his promise. When I entered his room, I found him standing with uplifted head supporting himself with his left hand placed on the writing desk.

The gleam of vengeance which lurked in his eyes and the scornful curl of his lips, gave a sardonic look to his sallow, deeply pitted face. On seeing me, he exclaimed with a sarcastic sneer :

“Mountains never move, but friends meet ! I promised you that you should hear from me, and, as you see, I am as good as my word.”

With calm and polite but serious demeanor I said :

“I am here to know your pleasure.”

“I wish only to give a friendly advice. Those children are a trouble in your house ; send them to Mr. Muzzarielli.”

“Never,” I answered.

“Mr. Balzani, you cannot love those children ! Answer me sincerely.”

“It is not your business to investigate my feelings. As a citizen I answer you, that higher than love stands in my mind religion and duty.”

“But I have engaged my word for it and you shall,” persisted he.

“I have the law on my side,” I retorted, “and the chief of police is beneath the law.”



"But suppose," he said with a grin, "only suppose—if one of these days I would make a descent in your house, and take the children away?"

"You would have to pass over my body to reach the children."

"You get heated, Mr. Balzani."

"No, sir, the tone of my voice is calm; I am only determined."

"Now, Mr Balzani, I will show you an argument, that will prove irresistible and make you comply with my wishes. I will make you a confidant of the chief of police."

"I decline this honor," I replied haughtily.

"Still I will do it in spite of your modesty."

In so saying he pulled open a little drawer of the desk, extracted a long strip of paper, folded it so as to leave only the first line exposed, and then placed it before my eyes, saying:

"Can you read it, sir? It reads—Alfio Balzani—Now you know very well, sir, that there is a conspiracy on foot against peace and order. I am in duty bound to arrest all the suspicious persons. You are the first in that list on account of your father. You might be cut off from it on account of your office and good behavior. All depends on the impression that the chief of police forms of you. The law has nothing to do with it. Suppose that you should be arrested as a felon, the children must lawfully go to Mr. Muzzarielli."

"This is a threat," I exclaimed, "and as such it serves to fortify me in my determination."

"Be not precipitate in your answer," continued he, severely. "I give you twenty-four hours to ponder upon my proposal. To-morrow, at this hour, an inspector with a squad will go to your house to hear your decision."

So saying, he waved his hand, in sign that the interview was ended.

I will not tire the reader in describing my feelings; I only



say, that my determination was, not to yield an inch, happen what might.

I did not go to the court that morning, nor did I relate to my mother what had befallen me. In the afternoon I took myself to father Carmelo. I found him in a very good humor.

"It seems," he exclaimed, shaking my hand, "that the *picciotti*\* begin to get excited. See all those stout and well fed monks? They long for a fight. I wish we could make a regiment of them—who knows? What is wanting now, is, some fortuitous case, which may give the hint."

Unconscious of my new adventure, he would have spoken of politics, if I had not interrupted him, by saying, in a sad tone :

"Excuse me, but I have something else in my mind at present."

Father Carmelo having listened attentively to the report of what had happened to me, grasped my hand, and with an earnest countenance, looked steadily at my eyes for a few minutes, then said :

"You cannot help submitting to circumstances this time. The position is such, that if you play the strong man, you will lose your liberty, without hope of carrying your point. All is for the best, my good friend. Don't you see plainly the hand of Providence in it? Free from any care, you may give yourself wholly to your country, and avenge the death of your father. Oh, if you knew what a veneration I have for his memory! If you knew under what obligations I was to him! Courage, my good friend, something whispers in my heart that, the hour of redemption is not very far off, and that you shall play an essential part in it!"

"But shall I lose all! all! even the consolation I have cherished, of employing all my strength and ability, in train-

\* A name given to the market boys, and used also, confidentially, for young men of a class inferior to the speaker.



ing, educating, and bringing up those children, as respectable and religious persons ! Oh, despair ; despair ! despair !”

In so saying I began to pull out my hair by handfuls.

Father Carmelo grasped my hand with his left, pulling it down with force, then bending a little, so as to place his face near to mine, with his eyes turned upwards, and his right forefinger pointing to heaven, in an awful and solemn tone he said :

“ Creature of God, resign thyself to his infinite wisdom, to his Almighty will. Fulfil the oath that five and twenty years ago you registered in Heaven !”

These words uttered in such a tone, at a moment when my heart was ulcerated, stirred in me the sentiment that had never been dormant. In a moment my resolution was taken. Calm and collected in mind I said :

“ Since it is written above that I must renounce self entirely—so be it ! Do me a favor, good father, take on yourself the completion of my sacrifice. Do not let the abhorred police come to my house. Stop early at the chief’s office and tell him of my resolution ; then call and take those poor children to the place whence I shall see them no more !”

So saying I left the convent and slowly directed my steps homeward.

An incident occurred to me, on my way, which shook, in some degree, the apathy that had taken possession of me, and, at the same time, occasioned me a narrow escape.

The Pauline convent is situated in the western outskirts of the city. One who coming from that quarter would enter the fashionable northern gate, *Porta Marqueda*, must cross a large place called Sant’ Oliva, where, in the afternoons, many parties play ball. On one side of this square, nearer to the city walls, there is a group of huts so arranged as to form three small lanes. These huts are used for stables, for manufactories of tallow candles, and habitations of the poor.



It being early in the afternoon, and that the only shady walk, I made it my way. On passing before a large door, my attention was attracted by the loud sound of a voice, in a tone of declamation. As I stopped, from curiosity, to look in, the following scene presented itself to my sight.

The hut or stable consisted of a single ground floor, unpaved, with rustic walls and unplastered beams and rafters. Its size was twenty-five feet square. Several benches, arranged in files, with a passage in the middle of the room, were occupied by a good number of stable and market boys, sitting with their backs to the door. In front there sat on a platform, facing the audience, a venerable old man, shabbily dressed, in the costume of the poorer classes. He had regular features, long, white, straggling hair, white beard, rosy cheeks and sparkling hazel eyes. On his right, hanging on nails in the wall, was a straw hat and a horn, on the left a wooden sword, a tall broomstick, and a tin shield. This man was a *Conta Storie*, tale teller, and the crowd his audience.

I knew that there were such *Conta Storie* in several parts of the city, but had never seen any. A kind of curiosity induced me to step in and listen. He was relating at that moment the story of the paladins Ruggiero and Rinaldo. The spectators were divided into two parties, one in favor of the former, and the other of the latter. This caused frequent hisses on one side and exclamations on the other, according to the hero of the story who performed some feat of bravery. The representation was divided into two parts.

When I entered, the first part was at its close. The old man stopped declaiming, and with the dignity of a hero, pulled from his pocket a ragged handkerchief, and began to wipe his face. A stripling arose from his side, took the hat from the wall, in his left hand, and with the right uplifted, holding a small pebble, began to make the tour of the benches. Every one had to throw one grano into the hat. If any one failed in



paying this fee, the young man, with the greatest seriousness, gave a stroke with a pebble on the head of the defaulter, and passed onward. I also paid my fee.

This novelty began insensibly to amuse me and divert me from my mental preoccupations. The acting of the *Conta Storie* was very comical indeed. Now using his hat as an helm, then with the sword parrying a blow, after inflicting a stroke with the broom-stick, intended for a spear, and everything with such earnestness and declamatory power, as would have suited a tragedian.

Going on with his tale, he happened to relate a duel between Rinaldo and a powerful Saracen, clad—man and horse—in steel. He personified the former at that moment, and the Rinaldo party were listening with bated breath. After a long contest he struck the sword on the small table before him with such force that he made it shiver, accompanying the action with these words—“and Rinaldo raised his sword with both hands, and at one blow, cleft in twain the man, the horse, the helm, and the cuirass, and the sword went seven feet deep into the ground——”

Involuntarily, and as if thinking aloud, I muttered: “Pshaw, that’s too big!”

All heads turned back to see who was the owner of the sacrilegious tongue, which had dared to proffer such irreverential words. On discovering me standing near the door, one half of the audience laughed boisterously, whilst the other half, (the Rinaldo’s party,) with eyes sparkling with anger and with tremendous *Santo Diavolos*, jumped up from the benches to chastise the intruder.

In the twinkling of an eye, comprehending my imprudence, and the consequences attendant upon it, I made a hasty retreat. The party chased me with stones all along the lane, and I was obliged to fly for my life.

On relating to my mother the circumstances, under which I



had been compelled, to detach the children from her side, she cried bitterly, her face turned livid, and her eyes sank. Poor mother ! It was the last, the fatal blow !

Early the following morning, Father Carmelo presented himself at my house with a solemn countenance ; the children were already dressed and in the parlor, forming a group around my mother. The monk grasped my hand, whispering, Be a man. He then placed them before me in a kneeling position. I felt my eyes grow dim. Exerting my failing strength, I placed my hand on their heads. Lifting my brow and straining my eyes upward, with the intensest agony I mentally raised a heart-felt prayer, invoking the blessing of God upon those innocent heads.

Perceiving that consciousness began to fail me, I hastened to stoop down, and encircled the children in my arms to give them the last kiss, but it was too late !

My mother, not being able in her shattered health to resist this blow, died in a few days. I was seized with a violent illness, and for ten days remained vibrating between life and death ; but, thanks to a strong constitution, nature rallied and overcame the fever. But what remained of me was a wreck. My illusions had vanished—my relish for innocent and happy amusement was gone, misfortune and sorrow had destroyed it. Two vertical wrinkles appeared on my forehead between the eyebrows, representing the furrows dug in my heart by the burning iron of misfortune !



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### DEMONSTRATIONS.

THE sun of the 29th of November rose in Palermo with its usual southern splendor, as the herald of great events. The whole population, without exception of age or sex, thronged the principal thoroughfares with that abandonment to pleasure proper to a meridional people. They bore photographed on their countenances marks of happiness and joy, which represented the state of their hearts and minds. A name was on the lips of all—a name which, like a charm, a talisman, stirred every heart and prompted the achievement of wonders. Who could have told, alas ! that that name, almost idolized, would have become in a short time an opprobrium and horror ? The mother who taught her young boys to pronounce it, could not foresee that the knowledge should serve them to curse it when grown to be young men.

The words, Progress—Independence—Brotherhood—Union and Pardon, uttered from the Vatican, were the spark which had ignited the pile which had been long accumulating. Every heart throbbed with joy, and from Etna to the Alps all was in a blaze. The name of Pio IX. was in every mouth as an equivalent of bliss. No one any longer saw in the pope the man or the tyrant ; history was forgotten ; and in Pio Nino every one beheld the extraordinary being, surrounded with a halo of celestial glory ; the true successor of Christ, who like his Divine Master was sent on earth to sow peace and joy.

All hearts were moved, melted ; religious divergencies



ceased, and every one rejoiced in the thought of a civil and religious equality throughout Christendom. The thrill of hope with which the hearts of all the oppressed hailed Pio IX. caused a commotion throughout Europe. Minds were nowhere more elated than in Italy; hopes were nowhere more ardent than in Sicily, with the exaggeration of the southern blood.

All the praises that men are wont to bestow upon the great and the heroic were given to Pio IX., and others of a new stamp were invented, the old ones not being deemed sufficient to betoken their sentiments and to give expression to their feelings.

That was a day of joyful excitement on the part of the citizens, and of panic on the part of the government.

I rallied with my intimate friends, and we decided to take up arms and strike the iron while it was hot. In fact, we went up and down the crowded thoroughfare called Cassaro, passing the word among the liberal youth to take arms and join us at Piazza Marina. Whilst we were working in this sense, a counter work spoiled our plan.

There was a class of old-fogyish liberals, who fearing that an armed demonstration would have a fatal result similar to that of Messina on the first of September, circulated an opposite advice, that a petition should be made to the government to accord a national guard to the city. The day passed in this manner; the government, of course, refused the petition, and night spread its dark veil, leaving the minds of those who had taken an active part in gloom and trepidation.

At the opera house the ladies appeared with tri-colored scarfs; a large portrait of Pio IX. was hung there amid cheers; and the *prima donna*, Teresa Parodi, sang the hymn of freedom. Those words, electric in themselves, sung by a splendid voice, and acted in accordance with her stately figure, and the patriotic warmth of the daughter of the country of Doria and



Columbus, made of the singer a heroine, and frenzy in the audience took the place of joy.

On their going out of the opera house, the excitement of pleasurable feelings passed instantaneously into terror, on perceiving the appalling silence, and the military, stationed at every corner of the street. Ettore, who was with me, said, in a subdued tone of voice :

“ I do not like the aspect of things. If those retrogrades had not hindered our taking arms, we should now be amongst our people ; but as it is, we are, singly, at the discretion of a cruel police. I am afraid to retire to my house to-night ; if I knew of some unsuspected place I would fain go, to remain there for a few hours, and to-morrow start on a tour.”

“ I know of one,” I said, “ and we will go together.”

Thus we hurried along, walking hastily through one street and another, till we emerged into the labyrinth of small crooked streets in the old ward Albergaria. There we slackened our pace, and proceeded with more caution, but without displaying any signs of hesitation to the patrols that we met. Entering at last a small, dimly-lighted street, we halted before a low, dilapidated building.

Turning round to see if any one observed us, I gave three raps at the door, which shook under the percussion of my knuckles. A harsh rasping voice was heard from within, with a hollow sound as if coming from a tomb : “ Who—by all the diavoli, comes at this hour of the night, to disturb the slumbers of a peaceful old man ?”

“ *Amici*, friends,” I answered.

“ Have I ever had any ?”

“ *Ora e sempre*,” was my second answer.—Now and ever—

Immediately the sound of withdrawing bolts was heard, the door opened with a creak, and the person of a stout old man presented itself to our view, standing below the level of our feet. “ *Entrate miei padroni*, enter my masters,” uttered that



individual. It was Mariano Zecca, the Zingaro we have seen before sitting at the forge at the corner of the iron cross.

Hurriedly we descended four broken stone steps; the door was closed behind us, and we found ourselves in a spacious, rude unpaved room. A portable forge, pincers, and a good number of heavy hammers lying in the corner of the room showed it to be the dwelling of a blacksmith; but a very remarkable thing was the presence of a score of men sitting on the ground (the floor was not boarded) by twos and threes, eating bread and cheese. These men, with muscular limbs and resolute countenances, by their blackened faces and hands, could be recognized as belonging to the trade of the owner of the house. The dim light, which from an iron lamp, hanging from the roof, gleamed on their faces and partially lighted the surrounding darkness, gave to the place a resemblance to a smuggler's cave.

On our entrance the men bowed, continuing their meal, and Zecca led us into an inner room, which was comparatively comfortable, possessing a clean bed, a table, half a dozen old chairs, a trunk, and a floor of red brick.

"*Che nuove*, what is the news, my masters!" exclaimed the smith handing us chairs. "I have been waiting for an order. The *Picciotti* are impatient. They number two hundred like those you saw in the first room. They possess no weapons, but I can assure you *miei padroni*, that they know how to brandish a heavy hammer as nimbly and as deadly, as the count *Orlando* his *Durlindana*."

"It is all over for the present," I answered gloomily.

"How so!" exclaimed Zecca, striking with his callous fist, a heavy blow on the table. "I had a plan! Oh, a plan which I have meditated these twenty-four years!"

"Let us hear your plan," I asked, and he continued:

"Have you ever been in the Catacomb under the Cathedral? Well, I do not know why in old times they spent so much



money, and adorned with so much luxury and with precious marbles, a place that nobody sees. But never mind this. You know that that subterranean chamber forms a quadrangle surrounded with sixteen granite pillars, and half a dozen of porphyry urns. Here they say, lie the bodies of archbishops and kings, but never mind that. At the end of the right angle there was once a brass door,—there is now a wall.—That door led to a subterranean passage with two branches terminating, one under the church of Saint Giacomo, and the other in the royal palace, under the Palatine Chapel, the door of which is also walled. Well, my masters," he continued with an animated face and sparkling eyes, "well, how glorious to go with my chaps, break the wall, cross the subterranean passage break the other wall, and with my two hundred *Diavoli* armed with hammers, spread confusion and death inside the palace, take the lieutenant general, and the generals all alive, close the gate, and turn the cannons of the bastions of the palace against the soldiers. Would it not be grand?"

"My good and noble patriot," answered Ettore, "revolutions have never had success when began by a conspiracy; that is to say, by the minority of the population. The strife to day was the work of two liberal parties, one who would take arms and the other aiming at an unarmed demonstration. The latter carried the day, and we must submit to the majority."

"Well, sir," answered the smith, bluntly, "*voi avete la lettera*—you are learned, and should know better than I, but my long experience teaches me that if you intend to make a revolution of words, or with principles of moderation and abnegation, woe, woe on you and on this poor country! The serpent cannot be caught by stroking its head, and if you catch it you must destroy its nest in order not to be molested any more!"

All night passed in combining a key for a secret correspondence, because Ettore intended to go abroad as soon as possible.



The following day I heard that several young men of the best families had been arrested through the night. They belonged to the moderate party, who, having carried the day, exposed themselves more than ours.

I went round to see my friends and found them unmolested. Domenico was lying in bed in a very prostrated state of health. When he saw me, he took me by the hand, and tried to raise himself. With a blended expression of joy and sorrow in his eyes, and with a hectic flush on his cheeks, he said :

“ Dear, dear Alfio, I was so happy yesterday, when I heard the shouts of joy, the enthusiasm of the people for liberty ! Alas, my life cannot last so long as to see the great day of redemption ; but I would die happy if I had the certainty that my country should be free.”

I left no argument or reasoning untried to make him confident of the coming advent of the so longed-for freedom.

My good, brave, and noble hearted friend ! it was written above, that he should not witness it !

After that day, the police began to work with energetic activity. But what could they do ? They had no need of spies, because men and women all spoke aloud, in the streets, of a revolution at hand ; hailing Pio IX, which was the rallying word.

In the mean time, a circumstance occurred, which bore the aspect of the boldest temerity or heroism, and which I have not seen mentioned in any record of history. A printed paper circulated freely, in which the people of Palermo challenged the king to fight them on the 12th day of January, 1848, which was his birth day.

Every one was taken by surprise at the appearance of this paper.\* Who was the author of this audacious challenge ?

\* The challenge ran thus :

Sicilians—The time of useless prayers, supplications, and pacific demonstration is over—Ferdinand has scorned everything. And shall we, a free born people, thus reduced to misery and bondage, still delay to reconquer our legitimate rights ?



Nobody knew, because it had been prepared by one alone, by one who was among us and kept silent.

The government laughed at it.—And, indeed, there had been no instance in the world, of a revolution preceded by a programme. And how could it be possible for an unarmed people, to attack a government furnished with troops, cannon, bomb shells, bastions, and every implement of destruction.

Still the people took the challenge enthusiastically upon themselves, and the word 12th of January, was in every mouth, as that of an expected festival.

In the mean time, the threatened day was approaching, with its appurtenances of fear, dread, enthusiasm and woe. The royalists spread every kind of alarming news, tending to dissuade the people from the menaced insurrection; but the

Sons of Sicily, to arms! All united we are omnipotent. The union of the people, is the fall of the kings!

The dawn of the 12th of January shall mark the glorious epoch of universal regeneration. Palermo will receive with joy all those Sicilians who shall come to support the common cause, to establish reforms and institutions suitable to the progress of the age, and desired by Pio IX, by Italy, and Europe. Be united, keep order, and observe subordination to your leaders. Have respect to the property of others. Those who fail in these points shall be punished as guilty of high treason. Every one shall be provided with the necessary means. Sicilians, to arms!

#### PROGRAMME.

The armed people who come from the internal part of the island, to support the national cause, shall take position at different points outside the city, designated by the leaders, and shall obey the orders of the directing Committee, which is formed of the best citizens of every class.

The people of Palermo, shall be, at the dawn of January 12th, armed with muskets, waiting in the streets the appearance of the leaders. They shall not fire on the soldiers, if not positively compelled to it.

In the meanwhile, it is of the greatest interest, in order that the execution of the general plan may not be thwarted, that nobody should dare to criticise the orders and provisions of the Committee.

We warn all, that whatever movement shall be incited, in or out of Palermo, before the 12th of January, is nothing, but a counter plot of that police, which endeavors to double our chains.

No contributions shall be received, except those which shall be spontaneously offered.

THE DIRECTING COMMITTEE.



people stuck to the challenge. Unspeakable was the anxiety of those days!

Although provisions poured in abundance from the country, the markets were bare. Everything was bought up in anticipation of the 12th of January! Nothing was seen in the streets but the transporting of maccheroni, cheese, bread, biscuits, wine, and every sort of eatables. Every family sought to be provided with food for a number of days, in greater or less abundance, according to their respective circumstances. The poor people pawned their valuables and clothing, and converted the proceeds into provisions. Those who were entirely destitute, found the purse of their neighbors easily opened for loans.

Thus the 12th of January was at hand, and the citizens of Palermo, having provided against starvation for their families, were prepared to fight, with stout hearts, for their liberty, and to be on the field as punctually as in an affair of honor.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE 12TH OF JANUARY.

THE hour of midnight struck from the large bell of the clock on the Saracenic tower of Saint Antonio. It was the fatal hour which gave entrance to the much longed and dreaded day of the 12th of January, 1848.

The stillness of the air, the overcast sky, the thick mist pervading the city, gave to that solemn hour a sepulchral gloom. Nothing was heard but the occasional trampling of the heavy, measured, and slow steps of a patrol; which echoed mournfully in the heart of the patriot.

The people in general, blessed with careless ignorance of their own position, intoxicated with enthusiasm, full of trust in



themselves, and unconscious of any impending evil, were pleasantly enjoying their slumbers, and dreaming of Pio IX, victories, and freedom. A very small fraction of them, those who comprehended the true position of affairs, and saw the vortex under their feet, could not find rest.

In a small, square apartment, of a large, old building, situated in the narrow steep lane called *Salita di S. Antonio*, ten men sat around a large table. They belonged to the best classes of society, and their ages ranged from twenty-four to forty. They sat silent and motionless. The diversity of their costumes, the strongly marked difference of their physiognomies, the fire gleaming from their eyes, the uneasiness of their countenances, the different modes of wearing their slouched hats, or when these were lying on the table, the large foreheads, and a profusion of black glossy hair, exposed to view, and brought strongly out by the ruddy light, which gleamed from a quaintly fashioned lamp, standing on the table, made that group worthy the pencil of Titian.

There had been in that room an animated discussion concerning the means of the revolution and the probability of success. There was neither plan formed, nor arms to carry it out. The discouragement was at its climax. Those men were no conspirators, because conspiracy there was none; they had met here, as others had met in various other places, who, feeling the perilous sublimity of the position in which they were placed, and prompted by the noble and generous impulses of their heart; had placed themselves as leaders at the post of danger.

After a long silence, in the position that I have described, one raised his head, which was leaning on his hand, and in a faltering tone of voice, said:

“Considering that the attempt at a revolution, with the certainty of a failure, is inhuman and unnatural, my opinion is to adjourn it.”



"And how would you manage that?" asked another, with passion.

"That is easily accomplished," returned the first speaker, impressively, "we have simply to tell the people that it is adjourned, and you will see them going peacefully home."

A third rose, with a stern severe face, and turning his head round, asked, "Is there any one here who would endure personal disgrace? . . . . No one answers, and I am sure that your answer would rather come in deeds than in words. Now, is not the honor of the country a more sacred thing than that of any one individual? The challenge of Palermo is a bold and extraordinary act; all Europe was astonished at its rashness, and all eyes are turned upon us. If we remain quiet to-morrow, we shall have committed the crime of parricide, bringing our beloved country into ridicule before the world, and erased at once the glorious pages, that the dust of centuries has not been able to obliterate. We would add scorn to servitude! Let us sacrifice our lives, if it must be, for the honor of our country! Let the rising sun see us at our places, as firm as gladiators, condemned to fight the lion for their lives! Perhaps, who knows, if this brave people, though unarmed, awakened from the lethargy of centuries, may not astonish the world, with the repetition of ancient deeds! To arms, my brothers and companions! Let us go to our houses and make ready! The hour already approaches. The square at the opera house has been appointed for the leaders to join; and thence, let the first rays of the new sun see us at the *piazza* of *Fiera vecchia*!"

These words were electric; all rose up, as if by one impulse, and drew up their swords, and crossing their blades with a clang, swore to die rather than witness the dishonor of their country.

Full of emotion I emerged into the street. The scene had changed as if by enchantment: the air was serene and suffused with the smell of the sea.



"Look," I said eagerly, grasping my friend Onofrio by the wrist, "a good omen! God is in our favor!"

Onofrio was small and slender, and in poor health, but he had a courage unsurpassable, a heart of the noblest, and patriotism of the highest order.

It was the time of darkness which precedes the break of day when armed with carabine and sword I left my house. The report of cannons at that moment made my heart throb alternately with trepidation and joy. On my way from *Porta Macqueda* to the *Quattro Cantoni*, on reaching the church of *Crociferi*, I saw at a short distance a number of bayonets gleaming in the light of the lamps, and a dark spot as if of a crowd. Seeing a servant with a coffee-pot coming towards me, I asked him:

"What is the matter yonder?"

With consternation on his countenance the man answered:

"All is lost, sir; there are soldiers and *sbirri* at the *quattro cantoni*, arresting every one who carries weapons."

This announcement filled my heart with dismay. I knocked at the door of a shoemaker who lived near by, and leaving my carabine to his keeping, I went on.

On reaching the *Piazza of Santa Caterina*, I saw a single man standing at the door of the opera house. It was Onofrio, who alone of all our friends had arrived there unmolested. On my drawing near he uttered:

"Alfio, is it you?"

"Yes, myself."

"No one comes," he said, angrily, "and it is already dawn. Let us go to the *Fieravecchia*, and see who is there. Ah! all is lost, but I wish to die! Are you armed?"

I related to him what had befallen me, and that the only weapon I had at the moment was my sword.

The *Fieravecchia* is a market square at a short distance from the gate *Porta di Termini*, with a fountain in the centre



surmounted by a marble statue representing the allegory of Palermo. Being a place easily accessible to the country people, and having exit by nine narrow lanes, which can be easily kept against an enemy of superior number, it had been deemed the best place for the revolutionary head quarters. On arriving there we found a score of young men partly armed, and with a tri-color ribbon on their breast, anxiously waiting for other comers. In half an hour the square was full of men, but only fifty were armed with fowling-pieces. Some wore swords, some knives, some axes, some smiths' heavy hammers, but a great many had nothing, and loudly cried for arms.

A little priest, with spectacles on his eyes, ascended the fountain, and with words warm with religious and patriotic enthusiasm called the people to arms. Those armed with guns divided into two squads, and took, one the way of Albergaria, the other that of Calderaj. Other brave young men placed themselves at the head of the unarmed ones, and taking different directions, went round with shouts, asking arms from the houses known as containing guns, and inviting the youth to follow.

This first movement encouraged those who were fearful, and in a short hour it spread itself all over the city. Every corner echoed with the repeated hailing of *Viva Pio IX!*

Those acclamations which came from the bottom of all hearts, awakening men to bravery and to the consciousness of their own worth, were repeated at every minute by bodies of people going and coming, led by their young chiefs like the waves of a stormy sea.

In the meanwhile the sbirri had fortified themselves in the station-houses; the troops were under arms at the Palazza in their barracks and in the castle. All the balconies and windows were full of women and children, waiting for something and not knowing what might happen. It was an hour of appalling expectation and doubt.



At a place called *Madonna del Cassero*, a man with a gun in his hand raised his voice with the fury of despair, saying, "Where are the armed men?—where the arms?—where the leaders? Treachery!—treachery!" and fired his fowling-piece in the air. A lady at the same spot came out on the balcony, bearing by the staff a large silk tri-color flag, and waving it in the air, exclaimed:

"Citizens, brothers, behold the sign of redemption, take it and fight under its colors the battles of freedom! But beware, beware, brothers, of letting it fall to the dust or being destroyed by the tyrant! This is sacred, because it is the first Italian flag unfurled in the air! The honor of having hoisted it the first, is yours! Die under it, but let it not fall!"\*

Whilst those things happened in the centre of the city, other incidents befell elsewhere.

A squadron of cavalry, which had been patrolling on the outside of the city, entered by *Porta di Vicari*. The people hailed them with the words.—*Viva la truppa—Viva Pio IX.*—The soldiers answered with their sabres. Chance would have it that four citizens armed with guns were on that spot. On seeing the brutality of the soldiers they took shelter under the portico of the Palace Cuto, and with rare boldness fired at the troop. The officer and three soldiers being wounded, the squadron spurred forward, using their sabres, pistols, and carbines indiscriminately upon the people. On reaching San Gaetano, where there is a marble statue of the saint of this name, half a dozen citizens, led by a brave young man, fired at them, with good effect. Whilst the leader exhorted the people to attack the soldiers with every kind of weapons, even with stones, a bullet from the pistol of a horseman took him in the mouth. His death was instantaneous, he had only the time to cry—*Viva l'Italia*—

\* The name of that heroine is Santa Miloro. This being a very remarkable fact, I make an exception to the rule I have adopted of not giving real names.



Pietro Amodei was the first patriot who lost his life in the Italian revolution of 1848, and I fervently hope that the never ungrateful mother country, will one day erect a monument on the spot, to the memory of the first Italian blood spilled in this strife for freedom.

Another squadron of cavalry accompanied by infantry and *sbirri* poured from the *Palazzo Reale* to the main street of Albergaria, making prisoners a good number of old people and children. They were attacked by a mass of people armed, a few with guns and the remainder with clubs, swords, hammers, axes and stones.

Twenty soldiers who were accompanying a cart carrying money of the government, were attacked at Porta di Termini by a few citizens, and defeated. The money was carried to a convent, and was of service during the first three days of the revolution.

Similar small attacks were made in several points, but the main body of the army remained in their barracks, fearing the women who were ready to throw from the windows and balconies boiling water, tiles, stones, furniture, and everything that could kill.

Whilst I was going to the Fieravecchia, to collect what other men armed with guns, might be found there, and take them to the places of action, the figure of a young stranger with a red cap on his head struck my attention. He carried in his hand an unsheathed sabre, and a brace of horse pistols in his belt.

"Who is that gentleman?" I asked my friend Giuseppe Nobile, who was walking by my side.

"Why," he answered with surprise, "don't you know him? That is the American, Dr. Valentine Mott."

The idea of a son of America, a free born man, offering gratuitously his life for the liberty of my country, impressed me with such a thrilling sensation, that I could not refrain the promptings of my heart, of rushing to him and embracing him



like a beloved brother. This brave young man stood by me the whole forenoon. A convent was converted into a hospital, and he applied himself untiringly to the relief of our wounded.

Whilst I was on that spot with Dr. Mott, a priest came through the crowd, accompanied by four men carrying lighted wax torches. He was bearing the holy pyxis. It was the signal of approaching death. This sight in that turmoil, raised a counter feeling amongst the multitude, and all kneeled with veneration.

The surly countenance of the priest was seen to change suddenly into somewhat of the sublime. He stopped ; with a kind of religious fervor, turned his head, slowly scanning the people around him ; then, with a voice of thunder, he exclaimed :

“ People of God, your cause is just, the Almighty is with you ! I, minister of the Gospel, by the authority conferred on me by Jesus Christ, bless you and your arms, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

In so saying he raised slowly both hands which held the pyxis, and marked with it a cross in the air. *Amen* was clamorously answered.

The people were moved. Religious enthusiasm added fuel to the already blazing fire, and that day that unarmed mass enacted deeds of prowess.

After several partial attacks, the government finally contented itself with firing from the castle and other bastions grape and round shot over the city. Four field pieces were also placed at *Porta nuova* firing continually with grape through the streets Cassaro or Toledo. My friends Onofrio and Andrea distinguished themselves on that day. A house at the Fieravecchia was established as the seat of the committee, where the chiefs continually repaired to be ready for any emergency.

A list was made of all the leaders, but I, being naturally



averse to pushing myself forward, declined to put my name to it. The result of that day's unequal fighting was, that the soldiers and *sbirri*, stationed in different parts of the city, retired with loss to the strongholds. The people, having accomplished so much, late in the afternoon, tired of the day's hot work, retired to their respective homes.

The aspect of the city, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, was dreadful. The sky was overcast, the air chilly; windows and doors all closed. Not a single soul was seen walking, and an appalling silence prevailed, only broken, now and then, by the gloomy report of distant artillery, and the crackling sound of balls and grape shot, striking on the pavement, or against the buildings.

"Hark!" exclaimed Onofrio, just as a ball had embedded itself in a wall, near where we were walking, "hark! do you hear that report at *Castell' a mare*? That is the minute gun of joy for the birth day of the king; while, at the same time, his satellites are sending destruction amongst his people! And the people! Where are the people? All resting their fatigued limbs, as securely, as if troops of angels were watching at their sides! I have a presentiment, that the myrmidons of the tyrant will make to-night a second *Saint Bartholomew*. It is our duty to watch over them—but how? We can only die the first, that is all!"

We stopped at the corner of *Madonna del Cassero*, absorbed in deep, gloomy meditations, heedless of the balls and grape-shots that at intervals whistled around us.

We had remained in that sorrowful position a few minutes, when I exclaimed:

"Onofrio, I have an idea, if it works as I think it will, we may still save the country! Come, let us see!"

Instantly we proceeded to *piazza Carraffello*, where two scores of *Picciotti* lay stretched behind doors and inside vender's booths,



"*Picciotti!*" I exclaimed, fervently, "citizens, brothers, you have confidently abandoned yourself to sleep, whilst the slaves of the tyrant are awaiting the approaching night for a general slaughter. Watch, sons of Sicily, if not for your lives, for the honor of your wives, sisters, and daughters!"

"Barricade all the corners of the streets. Use carriages, carts, benches, counters, beams, boards, stones, furniture, everything that comes at hand, to bar the way of the enemy!"

"Place a watch at every corner, and fail not to give at every ten minutes the signal cry of—*Allerta sta*—All is well!"

"And you, brave *Picciotti*, run round to all the churches and convents, and order them, in the name of the *Comitato*, to ring the bells of the steeples at every quarter of an hour; those who fail shall have their buildings pulled down!"

"Watch, citizens; the *Comitato* will be at hand wherever the urgency requires!"

Those words spread the desired alarm. Women, with frightened countenances, were seen at the windows; men came out of doors to commence their work, and the *Picciotti* started on their mission.

"Come," I said to Onofrio, "if we stand to answer the questions of those ladies, our work cannot be accomplished. Let us go and repeat the same scene on all the principal points of the city; for the rumor spreads itself like lightning, and the neighboring streets will also execute the orders."

It was already night, when wearied and prostrated with fatigue, we reached the headquarters—*Fieravecchia*. That place we found already barricaded. In the house of the *Comitato* only three members were present. They were sitting with their guns between their knees and smoking segars. Their countenances were of those who knowing themselves in a dreadful predicament, still stand and face it boldly.

"What is the news?" asked one.

"No news," I answered.



"I wager that this is our last night," said another; "for, who prevents them from coming down, with cavalry and artillery, to attack our formidable head-quarters?"

"We shall be around all night long," I answered, "and if there be any imminent danger you shall be apprized of it in time."

Thence we went to the houses of half a score of men, and placed them, armed with their guns, in some houses, opposite that of the *Comitato*. The whole night was passed in going from one place to another, and in exhorting and animating the watchers.

The plan had the effect that I had anticipated. The continual cry of—all is well—from all points; the unearthly howling of a large number of stray dogs, who, alarmed by the unusual noise of the city, did not stop their barking; and the clamorous peeling of the bells, made the government think that the people were in arms by thousands; and they did not stir from their quarters. The city was saved!



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE 13TH, 14TH, AND 15TH.

As the rays of the rising sun dispersed the darkness of the night, and brought with them light and comfort, the cloud of panic and terror which surrounded the hearts of the patriots dissipated, and with the coming of the new day they felt re-born to hope and bravery.

These presentiments were realized. Bands of stout country people and mountaineers, well armed, poured into the city. Amongst others there was the unfortunate husband of Maria S., the Banditti Chief, with whom my readers are already acquainted. He was followed by a score of resolute men armed with blunderbusses, pistols and daggers

On perceiving me in the piazza of Fieravecchia, he came forward, and doffing his cap, with the mien of a man frank and resolute, said :

“ Here we are, sir, for our honor and for our country—dispose of us, to the last drop of our blood !”

We counted already three hundred men armed with fowling-pieces, and a few thousands with other weapons ; and we felt strong—strong enough to attack an enemy of twelve thousand provided with cannons, mortars, and bayonets. But we found our cannons that day. On a place on the sea shore called Sant 'Erasmo, before the gate of an abandoned fort, there were two iron four-pounders stuck in the earth. Our fishermen dug them out, and brought them to the *Comitato*. Although they had broken mouths, and the axles, for balancing them upon the



carriages, were partly decayed, they were so ingeniously secured upon hand-carts, by means of ropes and iron contrivances, that they promised to stand the test. Now for the balls. After the revolution of 1820 a good number of cannon balls of all dimensions had remained in the possession of the citizens, who had converted them into scale and clock weights. A drummer was sent through the city reclaiming these projectiles. In half an hour so many balls poured in that we were able to select plenty of a weight suited to our improvised artillery.

On that day the people performed prodigies of valor. They accomplished those wonders, that only a people made sublime by the consciousness of their struggling for rights can perform. The well garrisoned place of the military hospital and other smaller places were stormed and carried, and all advances of troops from other places were checked with great loss to the royalists. The fighting was obstinate on both sides during the whole day. The bombardment had begun. One of the most interesting sights was, to see the eagerness with which unarmed men exposed their lives in the van, hoping thus to possess themselves of the weapons of the first soldier who might be killed or wounded. If you asked a starving man what he wanted, a musket or a loaf of bread, he would without hesitation snatch at the first—such value had a weapon in the minds of the people.

The revolutionary meal consisted of bread only. Tickets of the value of one loaf, payable by the *Comitato*, were distributed, and there was not a single instance of a baker refusing the credit. The prisoners were treated as brothers, humanely cared for, and placed beside our wounded, to be nursed and tended. Passing through a crowd of armed people that they had been taught to fear and hate, they could not believe their senses when they were greeted with cheers, embraces and assistance. And, indeed, it was an inexplicable thing to all



but those who understood the character of my countrymen, how a people bombarded and suffering every kind of cruelties at the hand of a brutal enemy, could treat so brotherly that same enemy, when by chance they were at their mercy.

In the midst of so much excitement, we perceived the necessity of being organized. In order that the revolution might be embraced by the whole of Sicily, and acquire that solidity necessary to its prosperous end, it was necessary to have at the head some of those citizens who had long enjoyed the public's reputation of wise and liberal men.

A young man among us, who was intoxicated with the glory of the day, opposed the measure, saying :

“ What need have we of adding other men to our *Comitato*? The people are as docile and obedient to us as if they knew us of old. We who have had the boldness and temerity to lead the revolution, have acquired amongst ourselves that kind of fraternity and communion of feelings and interest that can alone bind men together who have stood side by side in the solemn days of danger and glory. We did not think of our lives when we began ; nay, we offered them up for our country as things of no worth ; and now that we begin to see a ray of hope, we prize the revolution as our lives. Those who have not been willingly with us up to this time, though liberal, are lukewarm or timid ; and when the time comes that the country has need of energetic and courageous men, if one of them is at her head, who had not the courage to take her part in the beginning, he will fail her in her moment of need.”

Although these words had in them something reasonable—abnegation being paramount amongst us—the formation of a great *Comitato* was unanimously carried.

Several of us undertook to call on a number of citizens, generally acknowledged as men of pure hearts and elevated minds, and endowed with high, liberal principles.

An eastern wind had opened that afternoon the windows of



heaven, and a continuous shower poured upon us so that we seemed like men rescued from the sea. This neither discouraged us nor diminished our physical energy, and we had the reward of our endurance in seeing our enterprise crowned with the enlistment of the best names of the country.

After having assigned to our patriotic bands different posts to secure the city from sudden attacks, drenched as we were from head to foot, we bivouacked for the night in different places of Fieravecchia. The night passed tranquilly; the detonation, now and then, of the bursting bombshells, serving to keep our sentinels on the alert. The sun rose brilliantly, and the people had the joy of seeing the so much longed for *Comitato Generale*,\* sitting in the City Hall, providing for all the exigences of war, and the needs of the inhabitants.

This *Comitato* was organized in three *Comitati*, one for the War, one for the Finances, and one for the Bulletin. Each exercised executive power, whilst all united at times acted in a Legislative capacity. The most numerous was the first, for it contained all the leaders of the 12th of January.

I was one of the active members in the formation of that body; but as my idea was to act for my country on my own account, independently of any party, I did not sign my name to any of the lists. The entreaties of my friends were unavailing, but the contrivance of Onofrio, who belonged to the *Comitato* of war, defeated my determination.

I was leaving the Hall when I felt a light tap on my shoulder. On turning round I saw the venerable and sweet face of the prince of Pontellaria, the president of the *Comitato* of war. This gentleman, for whom I had the highest esteem, and whose memory I shall always venerate, handed me a folded paper, and without uttering a word looked at me as if waiting for an answer. The paper ran thus: "The *Comitato* of Public Defence has unanimously resolved, that M. Alfio Balzani shall

\* General Committee.



belong to this *Comitato*, and shall take the charge of the place of Secretary, the most difficult and laborious in these times. Signed: Pontellaria, President." I was taken on my weak side. The country required the sacrifice of my feelings, and I did not delay accepting. That paper was accidentally saved from the wreck of my house, and I have kept it as a sacred thing. The office of Secretary of the *Comitato* of war was very laborious indeed, for besides corresponding with, and writing circulars to all the towns of Sicily to urge them to join in the revolution, the paying of men, the finding of material of war, the organizing and giving orders were the work which devolved upon me.

As the members were leaders of squads, and were all day long engaged in fighting, the president and secretary only were seen there, and, if something extraordinary occurred, I left the president alone to hasten where the urgency required.

On this occasion I will relate two incidents which have a connection with my life then and after.

My brother Vincent, who from the first day had been bravely fighting without boasting of his exploits, came on the afternoon of the 15th to give notice that soldiers were seen from the Piazza Palazzo taking the route of the street Biscottari, which street led direct to the City Hall, the place where the *Comitato* sat. The news required immediate action. I sprang from my seat, selected from the antechamber a few brave mountaineers which we usually kept there as a body guard, and followed by them rushed for the stairs.

On descending the first platform the appearance of a man ascending toward me made my blood freeze. It was Saverio, my late valet. After the affair of the trial I had pardoned in my heart all my enemies. It was not the pardon of those who cannot reach their enemies, but a true, heart-felt christian pardon. This individual I had lost sight of, and quite forgotten. My first feeling was that of loathing and scorn, my second im-



pulse curbed the first. I saw before me a fellow creature apparently wounded, and a nobler feeling prevailed. He had reached the middle marble step of that large flight of stairs, when he perceived me. His face turned ashy pale, his frame shivered and he stopped with his frightened eyes directed to me. A single word from my lips, the denunciation of his late connection with the police, would have caused him to be torn into pieces. When I was three steps above him he suddenly raised both his hands and knelt, crying: "Mercy!"

The appearance had been so sudden and my feelings stirred so unexpectedly, that I knew not what to say. Taking occasion of his left hand being bloody, more to get myself out of the embarrassment than anything else, I asked sternly:

"What is that, blood?"

"A wound I just received fighting," was his answer.

Those words were sufficient to make the better part of my feelings prevail; I stooped down and taking him by the arms raised him up, and embracing him, I exclaimed fervently:

"I pardon thee! I have no enemies but those of my country. Go to Dr. Mott in my name, and he will see to your wound."

Some of my men had remained behind, and others were near my side. Saverio, at my words gave way to tears and sobs, and turning to the men who were with me, in an excited tone of voice, said:

"Hear me, my fellow citizens; I am a wicked man, a ruffian, an assassin. For vile interest I dared once to attempt the life of this gentleman, of this angel, and now instead of revenging himself he pardons me and sends me to be cured! Ah! kill me! Destroy this unworthy life!"

Perceiving in the change of feelings of this hardened ruffian nothing but the wonderful work of regeneration pervading all classes, I felt moved with ineffable joy.—The patriot conquered the man—and I exclaimed;



"May God bless you and all those who sincerely repent!"

But as the exaltation of Saverio prolonged the scene, whilst every minute for me was precious, I interrupted, saying: "Well, go to the hospital; and you, brave Picciotti, follow me."

As I issued forth from the City Hall, and emerged into the street *Sotto l'Arco de S Giuseppe* I saw a score of men, running towards me with the speed of fear. The foremost (the leader) was crying, with a frightened countenance:

"Save who can; we are betrayed, the soldiers are coming to take the *Comitato*; treachery!"

I felt so disgusted at what I saw and heard, that not being able to refrain my impulse, I struck the man furiously on his head with the flat of my sword, hissing the word "coward!" and then, addressing the men;

"Come after me, brave Picciotti, the soldiers shall be annihilated!"

What influence a few words can exercise in the minds of the multitude! The very men who five minutes before, under a coward chief were running for their lives, now gave the highest proofs of bravery, obliging a superior number of soldiers to retreat with loss to their quarters!

On returning from my successful expedition, I found at the Hall a gentleman who was waiting for me with the greatest anxiety. On seeing me, he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes: "Oh, Balzani! save my brother, they will kill him!"

This gentleman, by name F. Calagno, was a respectable man and my intimate friend. His brother was a Chancellor of a lower criminal court, and was named Antonino Calagno. Unlike his brother, he used the power of his office to gratify his tyrannical propensities, in abusing and tormenting all those who had the misfortune to fall under his jurisdiction. To understand the cause of the present trouble of this gentleman, we must go a few hours back.

The popular anger against the police was such that all the



station houses had been pulled down. The same morning, in demolishing that of San Domenico, the people discovered a subterranean room, in which there were human bones, and bodies in a state of recent putrefaction. Besides, there were standing niches, in which men had been walled up to the neck, letting them die in that standing and semi-buried position.

This discovery raised the popular wrath to such a pitch, that the wretched policeman, of any degree, who could be ferreted out, was sure to be cut to pieces.

Antonino Calagno, although not belonging by his office to the police, was an amateur *sbirro*, and enjoyed himself in imitating, as far as he could, the cruelties of the *sbirro*: for this reason, a large number of people had surrounded his house, and threatened to burn him in it alive.

The distress of my friend placed me in great consternation, so much the more because, our authority being of such a recent date and based upon popular feelings, I strongly doubted if the people would obey orders in such a case as that of Calagno.

Still, I wrote reluctantly an order to the chief of a squad stationed near the menaced house, to go with his men and restore order.

A few minutes elapsed, and my friend returned with the answer of the chief, that in such a case he had no power to restrain the popular wrath.

What to do? To insist without success would have weakened our popularity and partly dissipated the prestige, the only point on which the authority of the *Comitato* was based. But there stood F. Calagano, weeping like a child. In a desperate position, a desperate resolution. "Wait here," I said to him, abruptly; and I went away alone to the place of danger.

On arriving at the Piazza where the house was located, I



found it crowded with clamorous people, who had already begun to batter the doors.

By my tricolor sash I was recognized, and in a moment hundreds of voices shouted—"The *Comitato*!—give way to the *Comitato*!"

A space was opened in the crowd and I was suffered to reach the attacked doors. I turned my face to the multitude, and with a loud firm voice said :

"Citizens, I am here. The members of the *Comitato* are always the first in the place of danger! Let confusion cease! those who are armed with guns will take position on the opposite corners and houses. Fire at any soldier who appears at the windows; whilst those who have short arms and clubs will remain with me to break down the door and enter the house. How many soldiers occupy this house?"

A thundering, frantic clamor was raised to the sky with the words: "No soldiers; it is a spy, a sbirro, a *sorcio*, rat!"\*

I folded my arms upon my chest. When the uproar had lost its virulence, I exclaimed :

"Do I hear right, or do my senses deceive me! Whilst bombshells pour into the city, whilst our brothers are fighting at different places for the triumph of the cause of humanity you assemble here for a mean revenge upon a wretch, whose life is not worth a *grano*!"

"Brothers, we began a revolution without means, under theegis of the blessing of Pio IX., and of humanity. Under these auspices we have embraced and nursed the very soldiers who fought against us, and God has hitherto seconded our efforts, causing us to achieve wonders. And now you deviate from the right path, by staining our holy cause, with the crime of assassination!"

\* *Sorcio*, rat, was the name given to the policemen, or other royalists who had practiced cruelties on the people. Their hiding themselves in the common sewers and subterranean places—localities inhabited by rats—gave rise to this epithet.



“Fellow citizens, do not let the *Comitato* be ashamed of wearing this scarf! Disperse hence, and go to join those who are fighting! Where there is glory there is honor! Go, citizens, in the name of Pio IX. and of Liberty. The *Comitato* wishes it so!”

I perceived at this moment a man approaching at the head of a small armed squad. He was a gilder by trade, and knew me before the revolution. Profiting by this circumstance I continued:

“And you, brave citizen, Bevelacqua, remain on duty at this door, and, when all is calm, arrest that wretch and carry him to the prison of *S. Anna*, where he shall await the punishment that the *Comitato* shall appoint as suitable to his crimes.”

The crowd had remained all this time silent. When I concluded, they dispersed, shouting: *Viva Pio IX—Viva il Comitato!* A. Calagno went in the night to find shelter in the monastery of *Santa Caterina*, and his furniture was carried elsewhere. In this manner we saved, on the following days, the lives of many of those monsters of humanity whom the people sought to annihilate. Not the least disorder stained the glory of those days. Respect for property, and peace and brotherhood amongst all the citizens of different classes, were the words and the heart-felt sentiments of the multitude.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE GALLEY MEN.

THE sun of the 16th of January rose, and the people, already used to the risks of battles, cheered by the continued arrivals of armed men from the neighboring towns, and better provided with arms (having those of three hundred soldiers already taken prisoners), ventured upon more dangerous enterprises. The fighting continued the whole day with advantage to our side, and even the capture of a cannon. But it was a thing next to impossibility for us to conquer an enemy which kept in its strongholds, contented with discharging bomb-shells and grape-shot. It was in the sorties that the people gained the above-mentioned advantages. Eight steamers arrived during the night, bringing to the enemy the considerable addition of five thousand soldiers.

The fighting was fiercer on the 17th, whilst there was not a roof secure from the continual falling of bomb-shells. One of them set fire to the *Monte di Pieta*, a place which contained all the valuables pawned by the poor—two-thirds of the population.

Notwithstanding the many miseries received at the hands of the royalists, the order and respect of property observed and the humanity exercised towards the wounded and prisoners did honor to the wisdom of the *Comitato*, and to the naturally generous disposition of the people, who spontaneously exhibited the virtues which distinguish the most civilized nations.

The fighting, skirmishes, and attacks continued on the follow-



ing days at different points with success on the part of the people in possession of arms and ammunition, taking prisoners and mastering the fortified place, *Quartiere del Novigiato*. The people displayed in this last achievement a valor and self-possession equal to that which made the reputation of the Romans of old. One of the most remarkable features was the coolness with which they bore the bombardment. This vandalic resort proved fatal only to superannuated people and children. All stood on the alert. At the falling of the bomb-shell into the house, those who could nimbly use their limbs hastened without; a detonation was heard, and they rushed in again to see an old parent or a child mangled, and very often the house on fire. Without giving way to useless demonstrations, they abandoned the tumbling or smoking ruins, to seek another shelter that perhaps a few minutes later was doomed to the same fate.

The government of the king, perceiving the heroic resolution of the people, determined on other means. Messages were sent to the *Comitato*, and finally a royal proclamation, calling upon the people to lay down arms, and promising a constitution—the best that a fatherly king could decree for the welfare of his own children.

These were precisely the words adopted. The *Comitato* answered as follows :

“ Excellency—The city has been bombarded for several days, and the place where the poor had most at stake, is destroyed by fire. The flag of truce has not been respected, and peaceful, religious people have been, from the first to the last, assailed and butchered in their own convent. Therefore, the offers contained in your Excellency’s letter cannot be accepted by a people, who, undergoing, for nine days, the horrors of bombardment, and the showers of grape-shot, have gloriously upheld their right to those old institutions, which



are the only ones that can secure the lasting happiness of this Island.

“Therefore, this *Comitato*, as the faithful interpreter of the firm resolve of the people, answer, that : The people, who have courageously risen, will not lay down arms, or suspend hostilities, until Sicily, having assembled in Palermo, through a General Parliament, shall adapt to the times that constitution, which she has possessed for centuries, and which, through the influence of Great Britain, was, in 1812, reformed ; and was sworn to by the kings, recognised by all the powers, and has never been legally suppressed.”

In the mean time, a man came, heralding happy news. A 48 pounder lay on the beach, amongst rocks, ten miles east from the city, at the site of an old fort.

This news was received by the people with a cheer, and with joy greater than if the discovery had been of deposits of gold. The eastern part of the country not being obstructed by royalists, the unarmed people rushed by thousands to the designated shore.

Neither tools nor capstan ; neither carriage nor horses did the people possess, for the difficult enterprise ; but a resolute will ; which, when supported by the consciousness of right, makes man superior to every obstacle, and enables him to perform wonders. The huge cannon was dragged into the city by thousands shouting *viva Pio IX.*

There was in the *Comitato* a lawyer, who, in the revolution of 1820, had served the country as an officer of artillery, and now acted in the same capacity. Two brave young officers of the king's army had joined the revolutionists, and were of great service to the popular cause.

The cannon was, in a few hours, mounted upon an ox-cart,\* and placed, during the night, on the bastion of *Porta Montalto*.

\* These carts are formed of two stout beams, joined in the form of a ladder, two feet wide, and placed horizontally on two large, heavy wheels. They are drawn by oxen, and used to carry stones and heavy weights.



That old and abandoned city bulwark takes the *Palazzo Reale* in the flank and enfilades its bastions.

The 25th of January was a day of real triumph. The *Comitato*, at the head of a comparatively unarmed people, and with one cannon, ordered a general attack.

The *Palazzo Reale* is a sumptuous edifice ; a compound of the Saracenic and Norman styles. On its site was the residence of the Carthaginian, Roman, and Saracenic governors. It lies on the western extremity of the walled city, between the two gates—*Porta Nuova* and *Porta Montalto*. Flanking the three gates, on the side fronting the city, there were, at that time, two large projecting forts, armed with thirty-six cannon, of heavy calibre ; on the rear it had a rampart and a moat. The large square in front was made strong by the fortified places of *S. Elisabetta* southward, *Spedale Civico* eastward, and *S. Giacomo* northward.

The sun of the 25th found the people ready to attack the latter formidable positions. In doing so they gave proof of ingenuity and indomitable courage. As these buildings were in continuation with others, holes were made from house to house, and every room became the scene of bloody strife, the soldiers contesting every step in a hand to hand fight.

Whilst those feats of valor were going on around the square of the Palazzo, and the detonation of cannon and bursting of bombshells filled the air, his excellency, surrounded by his generals and his staff, was enjoying a sumptuous breakfast, *à la fourchette*. It was his custom, in those days, to have present, at his meals, one of those gentlemen who had been arrested at the dawn of the 12th of January, and use him as a butt for his jests.

These unfortunate men, were fed with eighteen uncooked horse-beans each day, and had to endure the mortification of looking at their oppressor's luxurious meals, and the insult of their scornful jests.



The lot had fallen that morning on an intimate friend of mine, who was devoted to literature and the study of astronomy. As he was acquainted with Gen. De Majo, the viceroy, his lot was not as hard as that of the other prisoners.

On a large round table, in the centre of a spacious room, were invitingly displayed dishes and bottles. The party were all standing around it, eating, drinking, laughing and jesting.

"Hear, my friend," exclaimed De Majo, holding in one hand a fork with the wing of a fowl, and a glass of champagne in the other, "Hear what beautiful music my cannons on the ramparts, and the mortars from Castellamare are playing! I feel my heart enraptured! What can those fools of your countrymen do? My soldiers are men who can eat fire and *prendere le palle cou le mani*—catch balls with their hands;\* and besides, to reach this place, you have the trifling deficiency of heavy cannons; we laugh to scorn their fowling-pieces! Let us drink the king's health and his glory! Waiter, give a glass of champagne to Mr. C."

An uproar of laughter followed this speech. My friend took the glass presented to him, and throwing it with violence on the floor, said: "To his destruction, as I destroy this glass."

Scarcely had Mr. C. uttered those words, before a crash was heard in the wall, and, as if by magic, the top of the table disappeared from its place, leaving only its pedestal standing. It was our *Pio IX*, which had sent his first messenger. The effect that this heavy shot caused, was admirable, and, at the same time, amusing.

No one was hurt. The only damage was done to the table, which lay in two pieces on the floor, with all its dishes, bottles and glasses, broken and scattered. The assembly was taken by surprise. Forks and glasses fell from their hands, as if by

\* An expression which implies military bravery.



an electric shock, their faces turned ash color, their mouths opened, their eyes protruded.

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed all, at one breath, in a solemn, slow manner, “ they have a cannon ! ”

This cannon told well, the whole day, on the carriages of the cannons of the palace ; and the three strong positions, for which so much blood was shed, were, at dusk, in the possession of our brave guerrillas.

During the night they abandoned this strong position, and retired to the *molo*, under the protection of two fortresses. Thus we became possessors of a good number of cannon, of different calibres, and of a large store of ammunition. There was found by us, amongst the papers of the viceroy, a letter in the king's hand-writing, where was written—“ If they persist in their felony, make of the city a garden for my amusement.”

The city being now free on all sides, except the northern extremity, where there is the citadel called *Castellamare* ; the *Comitato* employed all their cares and activity to organise themselves, and particularly the war department, which was divided into two *Comitati*, the first having charge of the *personelle*, and the other of the administration and material.

I was glad that the choice to the former fell on another—a brave and well informed patriot—but I had to yield to the entreaties of my friend, prince of Pantelleria, and to act as secretary of the second.

Our cares were now centered on casting mortars and projectiles, and erecting batteries to attack the citadel. The troops remained stationary at the *molo*. On our part all was activity, disturbed only by a slow bombardment.

General De Majo departed for Naples, and left in his stead, General De Sauget—the same man who had, in 1837, made the massacre of the people, in the towns surrounding Palermo.

My work, in the *Comitato*, was overwhelming in its continuity, pressure and responsibility. I commenced at dawn and



finished at one or two o'clock of the next morning, without having time in the interim to eat a meal; and my sleep was only three or four hours. My friends wondered how far my physical powers would help me to resist. I am sure that my continual state of excitement upheld my strength from being crushed.

It was the hour of two on the morning of the twenty-ninth when I retired, exhausted, to seek a few hours of rest. We had passed the whole evening up to that time united in General Committee, to discuss the momentous position of the country, and to make laws and administrative regulations. I had taken quarters at that time in the house of my sister, who, some time before the revolution, had married the son of a Neapolitan general. This brave young officer, unlike his relatives, had embraced the popular cause.

My good and affectionate sister, who never retired before administering to my wants, handed me a bowl of soup, two biscuits and a glass of wine (my daily food in those days), and went to bed. I had not slept more than two hours when I was awakened by a noise in the street. Loud contending voices reached my ears; and, somewhat to my dismay, I heard the repeated cries of *Viva S. Rosalia* thundering in the air. I comprehended what these voices portended (it was the prisoners cheering). Terror seized upon me. I called my valet, who in a moment was before me.

"What is that, Pietro?" I asked, with a shudder.

"Do not be alarmed, sir," he answered, calmly; "they are those poor fellows of the galleys and of the prisons, who, as it is evident, have been liberated."

"But how can that be?" I exclaimed with horror; "the prisons are strong, and situated where the bulk of the royalist army is concentrated!"

"May be it is out of humanity," answered he, with a sneer, "or probably General De Sauget has let them loose into the



city, to cause disorder, pillage, and civil war. Allow me, my dear master, to give you a piece of my mind. Anyhow, we are in time of freedom, and every one is allowed to speak his mind freely without offence. The fault of what is happening rests with you and with the *Comitato* in general. You have hindered the people, under the plea of humanity, from killing all the *sbirri*, spies, and cruel royalists. I know, from a certain source, that these wretches who are crying *Viva S. Rosalia!* have been kept starving. Suppose that the general in opening their prison made this beautiful speech: The king, your father, pardons and gives you full liberty. Go into the city, possess yourselves of what you find belonging to the rebels. There you will find many a faithful subject who will join you, etc. etc."

As I never slept undressed in those times, I hurried on my coat and cloak, buckled my sword, stuck the pistols in the belt, snatched the carabine and went out. Pietro was at the door, and in a quiet manner said:

"This time, sir, I intend to follow you."

"Do what you like," was my answer.

The darkness in the street was heavy. An eastern wind made the atmosphere misty and chilly, and I followed the current of human beings which flowed past. The bright light of a city lamp, which at long intervals shone upon the crowd, revealed to my vision an appalling spectacle. Cold, dirt, sickness, ignorance, want, hunger, despair and joy, were written in confused cyphers on their countenances. It was that class of mankind which is brutalized by crime, ill treatment, hard life, and an organized demoralization. Some were half naked, the most shoeless, with matted locks, cadaverous faces, and sinister looks. The marks of hunger were upon every visage. With eyes of fire all looked up and down the streets as they ran. Not a single voice was heard asking for bread—all the cries were: *Viva Pio IX.—Viva la Libertà—Viva S. Rosalia.*



I followed them through via *Macqueda*, turning the *Quattro Cantoni*, and up the *Cassaro* to the *Piazza della Madrice* where they stopped.

The *Madrice* Cathedral is a stately building, forming a mass of rich Gothic architecture, the richness and symmetrical order of which exhibits both taste and delicacy, producing at once a grand and picturesque effect. Its form is of a Latin Cross, and occupies an area three hundred and eighty feet by one hundred and forty. It was erected by Gualthier Offamilis, Archbishop of Palermo, in 1169.

This temple is encompassed by four streets. On the south side between it and the *via Toledo* or *Cassaro*, there is a large square two feet higher than the level of Toledo, which is kept as a kind of sacred ground belonging to the cathedral. A high marble balustrade, adorned with marble statues of Sicilian saints, encloses this precinct on three sides, leaving at several places openings with steps for the entrance of the people. In the centre of this square there is a pillar surmounted with the statue of Santa Rosalia—the patron of the city.

There were gathered three thousand wretches, the refuse of society. The air was impregnated with mephitic odor, rendered more offensive by the heavings of the atmosphere.

I had slowly advanced to the centre of the multitude when one of them, who had climbed the pillar of Santa Rosalia, began, with a terrible voice, to address the crowd :

“ Companions, we are, the most of us, the victims of tyranny. The blood shed by our countrymen has caused our release. We owe our liberty to their struggle for freedom. Let us thank for this the Madonna and Santa Rosalia. Let us think that we are born to a new life, and dedicate it to make amends for the past. Our enemies broke our chains, and they let us loose, as bloodhounds, in order to rush into new crimes ; but let us show that we are men, that we have a heart, and feel for our dear country and freedom ! Let us deserve the name of citizens by



shedding our blood for our country! Swear, all of you!—Swear with me to shed our blood for our country; to be respectful and obedient to orders; to be honest—nay, to be the supporters of public peace and tranquillity!”

The thousand voices answered affirmatively, and, with a hideous, unearthly roar, the multitude took the oath.

“Look here now, all of you,” continued the first speaker, “We must remain here until the *Comitato* provides for us, and, *Santo Diavolo*, not one of you must dare to stir!”

My fears had vanished, and tears of consolation dropped from my eyes. I hastened to the palace of the *Comitato* but not a member was there. Without losing any time I despatched two men, one to call all the bakers, and the other to go in search of a young man named Gaetanino, who was from the same prisons as those who had been let loose. He was a thorough chemist, and a brave and bold conspirator. He came the first, and to my questions answered, that he had great influence with the chiefs of the prisoners, on account of his being a gentleman and a patriot.

“Well,” I said, “the tranquillity of the country is in danger, and I leave its safety to your responsibility. Go, in the name of the *Comitato*, and take them all to the palace of the late Direction of Police, you will find there plenty of bread. Those who will go to their native places shall have plenty of money provided them for their journey, and those who will fight may remain. Gaetanino, this is a great service you will render, and the country will not be ungrateful to you!”

Everything succeeded admirably. Those misled sons of the country, who were contemned by the people, and banished by society, worshipped their native land and hated the tyrant. They showed with their deeds, how freedom and regeneration is powerful even to change, for the better, the most obdurate in crime.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### KING BOMBA.

It is not my intention to write the history of those times. I only intend to speak of the events which came within my own observation. I shall try at the same time, to point out in a condensed manner, the chief features of the revolution, both moral and political.

General Desauget, whilst turning all the criminals into the city, had marched with fifteen thousand men, making a large circuit outside, from north to east. It was his intention, as I had feared, to occupy that part of the country from whence the provisions came, and attack the city at a side unprovided with works of defence, whilst the galley-men had thrown it into disorder and distress. The general failed in his plan, because he miscalculated the character of the Sicilian population. The people of the villages near Palermo, on perceiving the strategic movement, broke the dikes of the mills, thus inundating the plains ; whilst scores of them attacked the marching troops from the rocks. Our *Picciotti*, on that occasion, showed that their bravery was not limited to fighting behind houses or trees, but extended to the open fields. They spontaneously formed themselves into companies of sharp-shooters, and on the fields of *Santa Maria di Gesni* gave proofs of prowess. The soldiers defiling eastward found this rocky region well garnished with our brave mountaineers, who threw them into complete disorder. Attacked from all sides, they were sometimes obliged to stop, then to pass over the exposed ground on a run. The infantry



sometimes gave place to the cavalry, which spurred away, leaving the company of sharp-shooters prisoners to the patriots. The conclusion of General Desauget's stratagem was, that he and the remainder of his army, consisting of 5,000 men, deprived of hats, shoes and arms, were obliged to run, and seek refuge on board of the men-of-war. Still, if fortune was adverse to his gathering laurels, he did not fail to have his name infamous in history. In crossing the town of Villa Abbate with the patriots at his heels, finding no resistance, because the male population was on the field of battle, he massacred the women and children, from the first to the last. All his cannons, muskets, and horses fell into our hands. The only places remaining in the power of the royalists were the fortified Palazzo delle Finanze, and the citadel Castellamare.

On the first of February the commandant of the former gave notice to the Comitato that he would surrender in the afternoon. This news spread quickly throughout the city, and divulged itself in a few hours from village to village. Its consequences were alarming indeed! The people knew that the bank contained millions, and supposing it was the property of the king, they thought they had a right to appropriate its contents to themselves. In fact all the men who had bravely fought, were seen roaming in this neighborhood, waiting for the happy moment, when the commandant of the place should throw the gates open. There were even seen some country people with bags in their hands, to hold the money they expected to carry off. I do not find words sufficient to express the hopelessness, despondency and dread, into which the Comitato was thrown by the menacing state of affairs. The loss of the money was nothing in comparison with the appalling consequences that event would beget. We saw that in the scramble there would inevitably be a wholesale slaughter of the people by themselves. What could we do to avoid the impending calamity? In truth we had found that these men, although



brutalized by tyranny, had since the very first day, respected us and obeyed our orders just as quickly as if we had the power to enforce them. But now the circumstance was different. They believed in good faith, that the money was the king's, and he having extorted it from them, they had a right to reclaim it. Our authority was simply moral, and based upon their voluntary obedience; but how could we induce them to obey an order that they would deem unjust and tyrannical. They had besides, each of them, already built castles in the air, about the conquered money, and when the demon of avarice takes possession of the heart and mind of a people, the consequences must naturally be fatal.

Four o'clock, the hour of surrender, approached, and with it terror and dread. The President of the *Comitato Generale* was a noble old man, who, on account of his exemplary life and patriotic virtues, was loved by the people and honored as the father of the revolution. It was resolved that the President, accompanied by a member of each *Comitato*, should take possession of the bank. A faithful squad was chosen to accompany this deputation, amongst which were the converted bandito we have spoken of before. A cart was chosen for our conveyance, and we started on the dangerous and seemingly hopeless enterprise.

On reaching *Piazza Marina* shouts of *Viva il Comitato* arose from the people. Our cart could with difficulty reach the bank, and the crowd which had made way for our passage closed up immediately in a more compact form. The moment was appalling, dreadful! Never have more solemn moments presented themselves for the ennobling or destroying the life of a people.

When the first thunderings of *Viva il Comitato* had ceased, the President raised his voice with his usual amiable but dignified manner, saying:

"Well, *Piciotti*, what is this crowd for? The soldiers who



are inside will surrender to the *Comitato*, therefore there is no one to fight."

"We want money, our money!" was the terrific cry in answer.

When silence was restored, the President continued:

"My children, you have effected a wonderful and honorable revolution, you have been very good and obedient, and the blessings of God have caused you to be victorious, but now you deviate from the right path, not purposely, but because you are in error. You think that the sums which are kept in this bank belong to the king, and this is a sorry mistake. Ferdinand took all the money in Naples long ago. What is in there belongs to poor widows, orphans, and public institutions. That is sacred money, my children, and to take it would be more than robbery, it would be a sacrilegious act. The *Comitato* loves you because you are brave and good, but if such a nefarious deed should be perpetrated, we would immediately take ourselves to a vessel and leave you to yourselves. Now retire to your homes, my children, the *Comitato* commands it."

Another thundering of *Viva il Comitato*, and all quietly dispersed as a fog at the blowing of a gentle wind. One of the members of the *Comitato* remained there the whole night with a squad, and the building, the money, the country itself was saved by the docility and natural goodness of the people.

On the fourth day of February all the batteries being finished, we attacked the citadel. The surprise and astonishment of its commandant were extreme when he saw that we had in a few days cast mortars and bomb shells without having any regular establishment or men who understood the casting of artillery.

The bombardment of the city was fierce and terrible. There was no place where the bomb shells did not fall. I will relate only one incident of the many I witnessed on that day. In the *Piazza Marina*, where the bomb shells fell every minute, there was a large number of striplings and urchins who



stood silently watching the air; he who first saw the fatal globe descending, called out—*Allerta*—beware. At this cry all threw themselves to the ground. When the bomb shell had fallen and burst, they sprang up, clapping their hands, with the joyful exclamations, *Non fanno maleson di caza*—they do not hurt; they are made of pasteboard. This new kind of rejoicing lasted the whole day.

At dusk the Commandant of the Castle surrendered, and the *Comitato* took possession of it.

A *Te Deum* of thanksgiving was chanted the following day in the Cathedral in the midst of a joyous population. A halo of glory surrounded the *Comitato*. This was one of the holidays of my life. Alas! how few holidays have I known!

To conclude. It would seem, in after years, almost incredible, that a city, deprived of arms and munitions, and without artillery, had been able to face, for twenty-four days, and then to conquer, an army of fifteen thousand men, disciplined, well provided, and supported by fortifications, cannon and mortars.

I shall close this chapter by giving the historical origin of the word Bomba, of which several explanations have been attempted, but, not one has hitherto been the true one.

On the 4th of February, whilst destruction and death poured into the city, in the shape of bombshells, another deceitful royal decree was sent to the *Comitato*, promising a constitution, which was, of course, rejected with indignation.

The opening of the decree commenced with the insulting expression—“*My dear children, for the love that I have always felt and still feel for you, my beloved ones,*” etc. The fact that these expressions were sent to us simultaneously with the bomb-shells, which were raining on the city, naturally brought into juxtaposition the words *Padre*—father—and *Bomba*—bomb-shell.

A silversmith and engraver, Gaetano Barrile,\* conceived the

\* This Patriot died in exile.



idea of consigning the name of the Bourbons to eternal scorn and abomination. He was a patriot and had been engaged in many a skirmish.

On the last day of the bombardment he disappeared. Two days afterwards he was seen sitting in the *Piazza Marina*, with a block before him, a steel stamp in one hand and a heavy hammer in the other, calling all the passers by to produce the dollars and half dollars they possessed, bearing stamped upon their face the effigy of Ferdinand II.

Placing the money on the block, he applied the stamp in his hand to the neck or face of the king—a stroke with the hammer—and the money was seen with the letters BOMBA, indelibly imprinted on it. The news spread throughout the country, and large sums of money poured in every day to be marked.

Being in his neighborhood, one day, I stopped to see him work. He was busy in stamping dollars, that a countryman took, one by one, from a bag, and placed in another.

“Well, Barrile,” said I, “it seems to me that you have changed your business for one that gives you no profit.”

He looked at me, and said, with great composure: “Let me finish serving this customer, and I shall answer you.”

When the countryman had gone, he said:

“I have heard, from learned men, that coins and medals are more valuable to history than books; and that antiquaries have by their means traced the history of some unknown epochs. If it is so, my present work will give a name of infamy to the Bourbons. Firstly, because money travelling in the world quicker than men, the name Bomba will be pronounced everywhere; secondly, if something extraordinary shall befall this world, and books be destroyed, when men find this money, they will interpret the history of the man.”

I shook hands with him, and went my way with feelings of admiration.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### A MOCK CONSTITUTION.

ALL the cities of Sicily had already nobly answered to the revolution of Palermo. Castles, cannon, and bold garrisons, had proved to be powerless before a brave people fortified by the consciousness of their own rights.

The feature which gives to that epoch the most illustrious and honorable page in the annals of the world, is the undisturbed tranquillity observed by a quasi-brutalized people in the midst of the tumultuous joy of a successful revolution. The most rough and neglected of them comprehended, as if by Divine inspiration, the principle of brotherhood, civil rights, and respect for property, and forgetfulness of private enmity; and a general embracing of each other and interchanging of moral protestations was to be observed everywhere.

The Comitato Generale, in the height of its glory, recognized and praised by the whole of Sicily, agreeably to its principles of abnegation, accomplished its noble programme by the convocation of a general Parliament in Palermo, on the meeting of which it would surrender its high power.

The organization of the National Guard was in the meantime begun. It was decreed that every citizen belonged to it; and several convents were chosen as the places of enlistment.

The dangers of war being over, calm restored, and the behavior of the people reassuring, those members of the aristocracy who formed the clique of tyranny came out of their hiding-places and went to the places of enlistment. Their manners were fraternal, and their words hot with patriotism.



The people, who were used to look at these magnates with a deferential awe, could not now believe in the reality of shaking hands with such great personages. As they felt in their hearts the noble inspirations caused by the freedom they had acquired, so they believed that the same cause had made the nobility warm partisans of liberty. As a matter of course, the nobility, the most of whom had been the supporters of tyranny, were elected to the highest offices.

I was one evening preparing to seek rest after the fatigue of the day, when I saw my friend Ettore before me. After reciprocal congratulations he asked me :

“What do you think of Pio IX.?”

“Why,” I answered, puzzled, “I think him the greatest man in the world.”

Ettore laughed bitterly, and then continued :

“I have been in Rome, dear Alfio, and our Father V. has laid before my eyes the state of affairs. You know that at the death of the late pope, a revolution was rife in Rome, ready to break out on the day of election of a new one. The sacred Consistoro joined, but no one wished to be elected Mastai Ferretti, being deemed weak and foolish, was decided upon. But Mastai cried, pulled his hair, and called the Cardinals murderers for this act. Finally he was persuaded to accept ; but on condition that Cardinal Micara and Father V.—the two learned men esteemed by the people for their liberal principles—would act as his advisers and ministers. The two gentlemen agreed to comply with Ferretti’s wishes ; but, in order to disarm the revolution, they thought it necessary that, together with the bull of election, there should appear a bull of the newly elected pope, showing a programme of liberal principles and reform. They made of their proviso a *sine qua non*, and Mastai—now Pio NINO—reluctantly accepted. It was night—the bulls were written and sent, in haste, to the press ; but when the original was presented to the pope for his sign and



seal, he read it, and with a shudder exclaimed: 'I will not do any thing of the kind! If I am a pope, I will do just as all other popes have done!' The two prelates retired, uttering the words, 'We are not, then, your men.' Thus Pio IX. remained alone, the prey of anger and dread. Towards dawn fear overcame pride; and the bull, which was destined to take the world by surprise and wonder, was signed and published. You may thus perceive how undeserved have been the praises to Pio IX., and that the termination cannot be but in accordance with the beginning."

Those revelations astonished me, my illusions vanished, and sad misgiving rose in my heart, now that the veil was torn from my eyes.

"Ettore," I exclaimed, "a web of treacheries presents itself before my sight, and we are not careful we shall lose all the advantage gained."

The city presented in those times the most lively aspect. The people, from the first to the last, looked happy. The activity was immense; beggars were seen no more, and the large number of pickpockets which infested the city had entirely disappeared. It seemed that each man felt a species of pride and self-importance as a free man. The grocer, the butcher, the cobbler, kept the hat of the national guard hanging on a nail in his shop, and his musket in a corner. If the lightest quarrel was heard in the street, he put on the national hat and intimated to the quarrellers that they must desist, and they did desist at the appearance of that hat. The usual fatal effects of the quarrels amongst the poorer classes had ceased with the discontinuance of the state of irritation.

The Comitato was in the meantime organizing and putting in activity all branches of public administration, and more particularly that of war, which was new for Sicily; this department having for fifty years been managed in Naples.

The Comitato of war employed every exertion for the forma-



tion of an army. All those who had distinguished themselves were elected officers, and those who had been the first leaders of the revolution were made colonels and majors. My friend Onofrio did not ask for any office, but the Comitato gave him the commission of major of artillery, and appointed him to the charge of the material in the Castle. In this duty he acquitted himself with the greatest energy and delicacy.

An incident happened at that time which was very near disturbing the tranquillity of the country. A steamer arrived from Naples on the morning of the 26th of February, with the two brother generals Statella, bearers of a constitution that king Ferdinand had graciously bestowed upon his beloved children of Sicily. It was the same mock constitution he had already sworn to in Naples, the counterpart of that which his grandfather had given in 1820. It was a piece of effrontery which took all by surprise.

When the usher brought these printed decrees to me, in reading them I felt the blood mounting to my head. The most disheartening thing which lay in these decrees, like a snake in the grass, was the nomination of our President of the Comitato Generale as his viceroy in Sicily, and of two Presidents of the special Comitati as Secretaries of State.

I took my hat and rushed out like a maniac. In crossing the rooms I met with the other Secretary of the Comitato of war; he was a learned man, with a pure and patriotic soul. He was pale as death, and looked at me with consternation.

"Well, my dear C.," I exclaimed, with passion, "what do think of it?"

"I think," he answered gloomily, "that the snare is well laid."

On leaving him I went to the cabinet of the President of Comitato Generale. I found the good and noble old man in a state of apathy. I tried to rouse him by explaining and remonstrating against the treachery which lay hidden in those



decrees, but all was of no avail. I could only draw from him "the Comitato shall decide to-morrow."

I entered the other Comitatis, and found one of the Presidents who was named as minister with a smiling countenance. To my energetic expressions he answered that it was an affair to be decided in session by all the Comitati. I went back to my office and dismissed for the day all my clerks; I then went out.

What a sudden change in the aspect of the city! The news had already spread. All the faces I encountered bore the old gloomy look. In all was discernible that kind of apathy produced by the sudden announcement of sad news, but no one stirred; they trusted in the Comitato, and were ready to obey the resolutions of that body.

I met, now and then, some of the old courtiers, walking with raised head, and an ill concealed joy in their countenance.

"Oh, my poor country!" I said, to myself. "Oh, good and generous people, how you are betrayed!"

Tired of walking, and of grieving, I entered, towards dusk, the Caffè Bartolotta, and went into an inner room, which was perfectly dark. I did not ask for anything, but sat there to rest and muse upon the imminent danger of my country. I had remained a few minutes in this position, when I heard the voices of two individuals who were entering the back door of the Caffè, which opened into a narrow lane. They had to pass before me, to go to the main shop, which was already lighted. When they reached the centre of the passage, they stopped, and one of them said to the other, in French, and in a subdued voice: "Everything goes wonderfully well, my friend, the only impediments are those hot-heads called the men of the 12th of January. If we can, to-night, dispose of them, in a silent way, we shall, to-morrow, carry the day."

These words raised all the furies in my heart, my blood crawled in my veins; instinctively, my hand dropped upon the



hilt of my sword ; but, as I fortunately could control my fiery passion, I restrained myself ; and looking into the lighted shop, I saw them sitting, and recognized them as the prince of S. and marquis M., the first a major of the national guards and both staunch supporters of the tyrant.

I saw my country on the brink of an awful abyss, and I was horrified. I went out of the back door without a fixed determination. Still, to hesitate, at that moment, was to be lost. Although my thoughts were too wild and wandering, to admit of reflection, calm enough for the conceiving of any plan ; I entered into the firm resolution of keeping the black conspiracy that the words of those two persons portended to myself alone. I feared that the communication of that infamous scheme to my companions would have been the death warrant for those individuals, and I was too frantically proud of the noble calmness which had characterised all the movements of our revolution, to cause a violent act. Slowly, on I walked through the Cassaro, ransacking my mind for an idea, which could extricate me from that terrible mental position.

On reaching the Quattro Cantoni, I met Onofrio, who, on seeing me, began to deprecate the general apathy, giving vent to his angelic and patriotic feelings.

Giulio Ascanio Enea, approached us at this moment. The presence of this young man, caused an idea to flash into my mind, and without losing a moment I exclaimed :

“ Giulio, is your music band at your disposal ? ”

“ At a moment’s notice.”

“ Go, immediately, and bring them here with you.”

“ What is there to do ? ” asked he.

“ Go, and come with them without any noise. Moments are precious ! ”

This valorous young man belonged to the *Comitato* of war. On account of his exploits he had been made a Colonel, and was now recruiting his regiment. With the ambition, natural



to a young man, he had already enlisted one of the best bands of musicians. I don't know how it happened, but from the first day of the revolution he had been fascinated with me, and behaved towards me with a respectful deference which was remarkable.

"What do you intend to do?" asked Onofrio, looking steadily at me.

"We must wake the people from their stupor."

"Ah, Alfio, you have hit it!" exclaimed my friend, embracing me and giving me a warm kiss.

Mr. C. and four other members of the *Comitato* of war joined us at this time, and I explained to them my plan.

"Excellent!" exclaimed all unanimously, "excellent, dear Balzani!"

The band arrived. We formed ourselves before it, and ordering them to play the Italian hymn, proceeded down the *Cassaro*, shouting, with the utmost of our voices: "*Addumamu\*—Tradimento—Fuori il tiranno—Fuori gli Statella—Light the windows—treachery—out with the tyrant—out with the S'atellas!—*"

All the windows, as if by magic, were at once illuminated. People kept torches ready for the purpose, and even the poor put at the window, the only oil lamp they burned in the house.

Armed men, boys, and women poured from every house. They, seeing men of the loved and respected *Comitato* at the head of the demonstration, did not ask questions, but followed the band repeating the same shouts. On reaching *Porta Felice* we turned upwards. The crowd was immense; the voices overcame the music. On reaching the *Quattro Cantoni* again, other phalanxes were in motion with other bands and other

\* This dialectical expression was used in the evenings, when there was some victory to be announced; or, some danger to be guarded off; and it served to keep the people the whole night on the alert.



leaders, thundering the same exclamations. All the city was lighted up, and twenty thousand men vented with their wrathful voices the hatred against the abominable tyrant.

At this point Mr. C. said to me :

“ Now that the demonstration has taken its due course, let us leave the people to themselves and go do something else. They will continue their noises until two o'clock, at least, when tired they will go peacefully home.”

We called together the other members of the Comitato, there being eight of us, and went to my printer, who lived in the street *Santa Caterina*.

“ Noble people !” exclaimed Onofrio, when we had extricated ourselves from the throng, “ they are frantic with anger, still they are incapable of the least outrage or disorder. At the present hour, whilst we fearlessly leave them to themselves, the reporters are busy in their holes writing long letters of slanders ! I read this morning in the *London Times*, a letter of a correspondent in which we are depicted as in perfect anarchy !”

“ They are not slanderers,” answered Mr. C., “ they are only ignorant and unfit for their places. They look at appearances, and instead of seeking minute cognizance of the character of what they see, they jump to conclusions in their own manner, and write them as facts.”

Arrived at the printer's, we drew up a proclamation, disclosing to the eyes of the people the treachery hidden in the king's decree, reminding them of the perjuries of the Bourbons in similar cases, and making them acquainted with the fatal consequences that a moment of weakness would bring upon them.

Although we signed our names as simple citizens, our being, in fact, members of the Comitato of war, gave the act a character of authenticity, trustworthiness, and respectability.

I ordered two thousand copies to be printed, and gave the



most peremptory injunction that before dawn one-half should be placarded at the corners of the streets, and the other half brought to my house.

My companions were cheerfully rejoicing at the success of our enterprise, but I having heard those words at the *caffè*, could not easily remain tranquil. I could hardly induce myself to believe that after that terrible demonstration, the royalists would dare to make any attempt, but to be cautious could do no harm, and I spoke to my companions thus :

“Prudence commands that you shall go straightforward to your quarters amongst your men. My dear Onofrio, you will go to your lodgings in the castle. To-morrow we shall meet at the Comitato and see the results of this night’s work.”

As for Mr. C., the Secretary, I had no fears. He was not generally thought as warm and pure a patriot as he actually was, for two reasons : the first, that in the early days of the revolution he being engaged with the secret Comitato of Naples was not present in Palermo ; the second, that his serious, calm appearance did not bespeak him a revolutionary man.

As I quitted my companions, I went to the palace of the Comitato, chose four brave, armed men, and retired home. Whilst I was soaking a piece of bread in a glass of wine, Pietro came in my room and remained looking at me. Comprehending that he desired to say something, I asked :

“Do you want anything ?”

“Are those chaps to remain here to-night ?”

“Yes.”

“You are a wise man, sir.”

“Why so ?”

“You have never asked company, not in the most dangerous nights.”

“What of that ?”

“You are very wise, sir.”

“What do you mean ? Out with it.”



"Nothing. I have been out to-night and enjoyed the noise, and besides I have seen a good friend, and ——"

"Finish."

"Well, sir, I am afraid to speak to you about serious things, because you always trifle with my words."

"Well, say on."

"As I was coming here a quarter of an hour ago, I stopped at a place to take a glass, and met there by chance a friend of mine, who was coming from accompanying his master, who had dined on board the frigate with other noblemen."

"Well," I interrupted, "there is nothing wrong in that, because the frigate bears the flag of truce."

"It is not that, sir. But according to what my friend confided to me, there is something which smells of treason. My friend found there one of the crew, a Sicilian and an old pal of his, who told him, in the strictest secrecy, that the soldiers of the frigate had this afternoon received twenty rounds of cartridges, and been ordered under arms. At dinner, amongst the toasts for the king, they made one for their success. The boatswain said that he heard one of the gentlemen say:—'We must first secure the chief rebels!'"

I bit my lips, for I did not like that such report should circulate, and with a careless air, I asked, "At what time commenced the dinner?"

"*Ad un ora di notte, signore.* One hour after dusk, sir."

"And after all," I rejoined with a laugh, "you get offended if I make light of your fancies. Now, my good patriot Pietro, as for the cartridges, it is very natural that they, being in our waters, should be cautious. With regard to their drinking success; you know very well that they are bearers of a constitution, and it is the business of the members of the *Comitato*—who are the interpreters of the wish of the people—to answer. As for the remark about the chief rebels, do you not feel ashamed of yourself to heed the words of a man who was drunk



with champagne ! Besides we are now free, and freedom means, that every one may think and speak at his pleasure, provided he does not offend any one, or commit unlawful acts. Fie on you, Pietro ! You must go to-morrow to find your friend and tell him, that he is very wrong to spread such nonsenses !”

“ Santo Diavolo ! I beg your pardon, sir. But you have a way of your own to convince me, even when I am sure I am right.”

“ Good night, Pietro.”

“ God bless you, sir !”

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE DUKE OF PALIO.

A LOUD knocking at the front door startled me from my sleep, one hour before dawn. I jumped from my couch in alarm and snatched my carabine. Immediately Pietro came and announced that there was on the outside a man who said he was the printer's brother.

“ Let him come in.”

The man entered with fright depicted on his countenance, saying :

“ My brother was arrested with all the copies of the Manifesto, whilst he was beginning to paste them on the walls.”

“ By whom ?” I thundered, passionately, beating vehemently my foot upon the floor.

“ By the national guard,” he answered, startled.

“ Whose battalions ?”

“ The duke of Palio's.”

“ Go, I shall see to it.”



This news plunged me into a sea of consternations. That act was against the law of the press; it was arbitrary and tyrannical. It was an open act of reaction. It was treason. I sat clasping my forehead with both hands. The moment was terrible, solemn! A simple word from my lips could cause a massacre, but I would rather die than dishonor the revolution. Whilst my mind was in a train of thought and reflections concerning the great crisis in which we were, Pietro entered announcing that the footman of the duke of Palio wished to see me on important business.

On entering, he said, with the utmost politeness, that the duke desired to see me soon, and that he would have come himself if he had known that I was at home.

"Tell the duke," I answered, "that I shall be at his house in a quarter of an hour."

The affair began now to take a serious aspect; and, as it has always been with me in moments of great danger, I took at once my resolution; my mind became calm, and I went to the table and wrote the following note.

"At sight of the present put yourself at the head of your men and march quickly to my house, without any noise of drums—BALZANI.—" I addressed it—Col. G. A. Enea—for he was the only one whose hot passions I could manage at my will.

I had long been acquainted with the duke of Palio. He was a very amiable gentleman, rich and powerful. He had always kept aloof from the court, and enjoyed the reputation of a liberal. He had been, on account of these qualities, chosen as a member of the *Comitato* of Finance, and a Colonel of the National Guard. I had scarcely finished my toilet, before Colonel Enea was at my house leading three hundred men. He entered my room, asking with excitement: "What is it, Mr. Balzani?"

"Sit down," I answered. "The thing that I am going to



communicate to you, is an affair which requires calmness, self-possession and prudence. I wish, before I unravel to you the plot, that you will pledge to me your word of honor, that, if our undertaking is successful, you will keep my revelations secret."

The brave young man gave his hand in token of promise, and I related to him what I heard at the *caff  *, the report of Pietro, the arrest of the printer of the *Comitato*, and the summons of the duke.

During my narrative the face of Enea was suffused, and his eyes flashed fire. When I arrived at the summons, he jumped from the chair, unsheathed his sabre, and, waving it in the air, exclaimed :

"To the attack of that infamous palace ! Forward !"

"That is what I feared from you," I said calmly. "I was wrong in asking your co-operation in this momentous affair, in which the honor of our dear country and the lives of the best patriots are involved. Please put up your sabre, and sit down."

He felt piqued at my words, and complied with my request in an abashed manner. He only ejaculated, between his teeth, with suppressed rage, "and now what do you intend to do ?"

"I intend," I replied, "to go alone to the duke. He is naturally a good man, and rather timid. My going alone will show both confidence and fearlessness ; and I hope to manage the affair so as to make every thing right. If the duke has been, on account of his yielding nature, imposed upon by ruffians, and allured into the execution of an infamous scheme, the loss of my life will save, perhaps, those of other patriots. You will draw your companies at a pistol-shot from the palace. You must be sure that, if the worst come to the worst, they will not catch me unawares. These two revolvers, which I carry in the pockets of my overcoat, will give you the signal ; and if you cannot arrive in time to save my life, you will at least



thwart the execution of their plan and save the country. But, beware! Do not take a single shot for a sign—for an accidental discharge of a gun would ruin all my plan!”

“But I will go in with you,” said Enea, testily.

“This is another foolishness. In a palace where there are fifty *Campieri* armed *cap-a-pie*, besides a large number of domestics, your company would only serve to make another victim, and better facilitate their plan. Now, forward.”

On my entering the Palio palace, a footman dressed in gallooned livery and breeches, silk stockings and buckled pumps, led the way, and I heard the heavy gates close with a clang behind me. There were in the court-yard several *Campieri*, sitting in different positions, with their guns between their legs. Several servants in full livery were going up and down the large, marble, decorated stairs, and darted at me very suspicious glances until I was ushered into the library.

The library was a large octagonal room, having three large doors and a balcony. The walls were entirely covered with shelves of books. The duke was, at my entrance, sitting before a large, round table, upon which there were two bundles of printed papers, a small silver bell, and a dozen snuff-boxes of different materials, shapes and dimensions. He rose on seeing me, and looked at me with a haughty countenance. I slid a few paces sideward, and placed myself in front of him, with my back to the shelves, and in a manner so as to have the three doors in range of my eyes. I drew myself up with my left hand holding the collar of my coat, and my right hanging loosely. The duke looked at me haughtily; I regarded him with a steady, calm, and freezing glance. Not a word from either side.

To hesitate, at that moment, was to be lost. Therefore, to get out of the painful state of uncertainty, I broke the ice, addressing the duke with slow, measured accents, giving to the sound of my voice an impressive tone :



"Duke of Palio, I came here alone, trusting in the nobility of your heart. I came to save you!"

He raised up his head superciliously at these words, and I continued.

"Do not wonder! I am cognisant of the foul plot; of the circumstances at the dinner on board the frigate; and of the felonious scheme. I should have come accompanied by a couple of thousand *Picciotti*—and—still—you see me here alone!—alone, inside of your palace—alone, in the midst of your armed men—but not alone; because, I have the strong support of my conscience, and of yours, which will protect me against yourself! Duke of Palio, you are a good man, you are a patriot—but, you are the dupe of assassins, who, taking advantage of your yielding nature, have lured you into a conspiracy! You are staining your escutcheon with the crime of parricide! In arresting the printer of the *Comitato*, without cause and without authority, you have anticipated the exercise of that tyranny which you are endeavoring to re-establish! By hindering the publication of that paper, you have destroyed the principle of the freedom of the press, for which our blessed people have shed so much blood! Duke of Palio, you are guilty of the most shameful ingratitude! You are a member of the *Comitato*—a man beloved by the people, who, in electing you as one of their leaders, have openly proclaimed their complete confidence in you—and you have, in reciprocation, betrayed their trust! Your name once honored and trust-inspiring, will now be conveyed to posterity as the synonym of opprobrium, and your children will be ashamed to bear it!"

At those words he slowly approached his trembling hand to the small silver bell, and I continued with energy and excitement, adding to the words the gesture of my hands:

"Duke of Palio, if a man who esteems you, and who loves his country paramount above everything, had not come to your rescue, this palace, by this time, would be a mass of smoking



ruins, and you, and your children, writhing in agony! Make amends, Duke of Palio!—moments are precious! . . . .”

At this moment the report of a gun\* was heard from the street; the duke started, and with fright on his face, exclaimed:

“Cease! cease, Balzani! Tell me what I shall do! I have been misled! I intended to serve the country! Tell me what I shall do!”

I could perceive from the gradual change of his countenance, the stirring of his internal feelings, until the better part of him prevailed, and I am sure that even if that timely and alarming report had not been heard, he would have come to the same conclusion. With a soft and gentle voice, which showed the feelings of my heart, I answered:

“What you have to do is very simple. Release immediately the printer, give me the papers, and lend me your equipage. Leave the rest to me.”

The physiognomy of the duke brightened up, a tear trembled in his eye, and extending his hand to me, he said, with an agitated voice: “We have been friends, Alfio.”

“And we shall always be,” I answered, pressing his hand. He then advanced to the table and shook the silver bell.

Scarcely had the silvery sound broken the air, before a door was thrust wide open, and two armed *Campieri* and a servant appeared in the act of rushing in. The duke’s countenance became disconcerted, and, with a hasty waving of his hand, and a displeased voice, he said: “What business have you two here? I want you, Giuseppe.”

The *Campieri* retired with the same haste they had approached, and the servant advanced with a low bow.

“Giuseppe,” said the duke, “in five minutes, my best equipage at the door. Place in it those papers.”

\* It sometimes happened that on account of unskilfulness a gun went off, as in this case befel one of Enea’s men.



A few minutes we passed in talking of a law-suit and indifferent matters, when the footmen entered, announcing the carriage.

In taking leave I said to the duke : " I hope I shall see you at the *Comitato* to-day !"

" Without fail," was his prompt answer.

Colonel Enea sent his men to their quarters with the Major, and jumped into the conveyance. His face was full of wonder.

" What is the meaning of this carriage and liveries?" he asked with an air of perplexity.\*

" You shall see," I answered. We passed the whole forenoon in riding throughout the city, distributing the printed *manifesto* in all the clubs, apothecary-shops, *caffes*, and stores, and handing them to all those we met on our way.

The effect was equal to my expectations. The prints being distributed by two components of the *Comitato*, riding in the carriage of one of the most powerful of the nobility, gave the act a solemnity that served to counteract entirely the plot of our enemies.

For the sake of truth, be it said that the first who moved in the *Comitato-Generale*, the rejection of the king's decrees, were the duke of Palio and the Presidents, who were nominated thereby one as vicery, and two as ministers. The rejection was carried unanimously.

\* In those times the nobility had discontinued the use of luxurious equipages.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### DIPLOMACY AND TREACHERY.

It is human nature to court and applaud the powerful. There is no instance on record where a potentate has been carried in triumph at the moment of transferring his power into the hands of another, and returning to lose himself among the multitude of private individuals.

The *Comitato-Generale*, on the appointed day, proceeded on foot, in a body, from the Governmental Palace to the church of San Domenico ; where the members of the new Parliament had met to assume the power of a constituent assembly.

The *Cassaro* and other streets that the *Comitato* passed, presented a beautiful spectacle. The national guard was drawn up in two lines ; balconies and windows were adorned with arras, and millions of tricolor flags were displayed from them. The fair sex, in their best attire, waving their handkerchiefs completed the beauty and magnificence of the scene. Flowers were strewed over the heads of the passing rulers, and the universal shouts of *Viva il Comitato* filled the air. It gave the idea of a triumphal entrance of a victorious Roman leader, and was the best guerdon that a nation could bestow on a citizen.

The first act of the Parliament was the election of the noble old gentleman, late president of the *Comitato-Generale* as president of the Sicilian government.

All the acts of the late assembly were approved ; the appointments respected. I was installed in the new organization, at the head of the second department of ministry of war



The governmental machinery worked admirably, the people were happy, and tranquillity reigned in the country as if there never had been any disturbance.

The general thought was concentrated on the idea of expelling the king of Naples from the only place he occupied in Sicily—the Citadel of Messina. The English government had, since the first days of the revolution, shown great sympathy for us, and its agents succeeded in luring our president into the English policy. We being islanders, the sympathy and support of a great maritime nation was not to be slighted or refused.

The materials of a great political conflagration had been preparing in Europe for years by the result of tyrannical abuses. The glorious revolution of Sicily was the beacon which made other Italian people aware that the moment for downtrodden nationalities to raise their heads and assert their rights had arrived. One after another they shook or destroyed the thrones, some proclaiming the Republic, and others remaining undecided as to their new form of government.

The English cabinet was startled at the aspect of affairs. The issue of that combustion might be either several Republics or a united constitutional kingdom of Italy, both events disadvantageous to their own policy. They feared on the one hand the dangerous influence of neighboring Republics on their own people, and on the other, were jealous of a rising nation which might become a powerful rival.

The English nation will never countenance the union of the whole of Italy, except it serves them to avoid a danger at home. Palmerston, who, it must be owned, is one of the best diplomatists of the world, laughed, took a pinch of snuff, and said: "Boys, leave them to me." In fact, the same agents, who by their expressed sympathy had acquired the confidence of the sincere and generous Italian leaders, began to exert their influence with a view to separate the Italian provinces



from one another, both morally and politically. As my purpose is to speak of Sicily, and particularly of those events in which it was my lot to engage, I limit myself to sketching in a condensed manner the conduct of the British government in that island.

Lord Palmerston having skilfully insinuated himself into the confidence of our sincere and honest President, found it an easy task to lead our parliament by cunning and treacherous devices on the road to destruction. His aim was to place obstacles in the way of the union of the Italian States, and then to crush them singly.

The parliament of Sicily declared King Ferdinand II. and his dynasty to have forfeited the throne of Sicily forever, and elected the Duke of Genova their constitutional King. This first act which cut off the island from the common cause of Italy being accomplished, Palmerston began to play a double game. On one side he caused the Duke of Genova to decline the crown, on the other he influenced our government to keep the refusal secret under the pretence of fear of republicanism. He promised that if we kept steady in our declared policy, the English government would assist us morally and materially against King Ferdinand, otherwise it would oppose us.

The King of Naples was in the meantime preparing an army for the invasion of Sicily, but Palmerston wished us to keep quiet and leave to the English the thought of our safety, hinting that if we showed ourselves prepared in a warlike array, England would join the King of Naples. Our President and ministers being good and patriotic men, and believing in the good faith of Palmerston, fell easily into his snare and adopted his plan. In fact, enormous sums were daily spent for the accoutrements of an army, but the men who poured from every quarter to the opened enlistments were mostly refused, under the plea of being, some too short, some too fat, some deficient in hair, some tending to consumption, and so



on. The news was at the same time circulated that the Neapolitans were not willing to fight, and the people, instead of being trained in preparation for a struggle of life and death, were allowed to expend their excitement in jokes, mockeries, and epigrams against King Bomba.

Some of the patriots of the 12th of January, who saw the politics of the country in a different light, were indignant at the unmanly inaction in which a noble and heroic people were kept, and foreboded nothing but ruin.

I must record here, that, although Sicily had been politically cut off from the common cause of Italy, the Sicilians, in spite of diplomacy, sent a body of volunteers, commanded by the brave patriot Colonel G. L. M., to fight in the battles of Italian independence, under king Carlo Alberto.

Let us return to our history. I was one morning sitting in my department of the ministry, with my hands clasping my brow. The weariness brought on me by the overwhelming work, and the affliction caused by the unpromising state of my country, made me fall into a state of moping melancholy. A thought crossed my mind, and, shaking off, with an effort, my mental torpor, I took a sheet of writing paper and wrote as follows:—"To-night, at 8 o'clock, meet at the house of Colonel Enea—A. BALZANI." I made twenty copies of this, and addressed them to all the leaders of the 12th of January, who were now high officers in the army.

Thus we started a club which we denominated *L' Apostolato*; the object of which was, to advise, in a constitutional way, the Executive Power; and to support it in every enterprise that concerned the welfare of the country.

My friend Mr. C—, the chief of the first department of the Ministry of War, was selected as secretary, and a member of the Parliament as president. The second meeting took place at the house of Colonel I., and then the ordinary sittings were



established in the convent of Carmine, where the club increased to a formidable number.

There reappears now in our history a man whom we had forgotten. Our old friend Fabio Malvico, who had been, through intrigues, employed by the king as *Intendente* of the province of Campobasso. When the revolution proved to be victorious, he quitted his office and came to Palermo, crying loudly, that he was ready to die for the country. He did not ask office, but passed his days in making liberal speeches. In a word, he acquired the name of a great liberal. As the president of our club retired, he was elected in his place almost unanimously.

Deputations began to be sent from the club to the president of the government, begging that an army might be speedily organized. The president was a noble patriot and an honest man; but, adhering to the English policy, was annoyed with our remonstrances, and after several evasive answers, said:

“We are Islanders, and must depend upon the protection of England. If we appear in warlike array, the English government will refuse us assistance.”

We answered on our part, that our being armed could neither offend, nor give umbrage to the English; that our brave people wished to fight their own battles for freedom. Besides, we observed, that when a person appears to be weak or foolish, even his own bosom friends abandon or deride him; whilst, if he behaves in a manly way, he commands respect even from his enemies.

The President and his honest counsellors, thinking, in good faith, that the English influence could save the country, held firmly to their policy. Our opposition did not slacken. The ministers, in order to be let alone in achieving peacefully and without soldiers, the freedom of the country, found it expedient to neutralize our powerful influence with the people. To effect this they called to their aid the colonels of the national guard.



These noblemen, after the affair of the duke of Palio had gained by loud liberal words and an untiring assistance at the quarters of the National Guard the reputation of patriots. By feeding their men with fraternal expressions, interesting themselves in drilling, they had obtained the expected recompense of esteem and submission. Thus the ministers in order to succeed in their plan of saving the country through the influence of Palmerston, had to get rid of the man who had a personal interest in the triumph of the revolution, and to league themselves with the men who secretly wished the restoration of tyranny. The Colonels of the National Guard, with few exceptions succeeded by degrees through cunning devices and by the agency of their satellites in insinuating so many slanders into the virgin ears of the people, that in a short time the name of men of the revolution became a synonym for malversation.

To more fully accomplish their plans they sent for Foreign officers, under pretext of instructing the men. Palmerston's game, supported by the half masked President of France, was in the full tide of success. Foreign adventurers were sent through Italy as cosmopolite soldiers of freedom. Thus the men who had risked every thing and worked so hard for the freedom of their country found themselves at once laid aside and the few votaries of tyranny waited for the opportunity of throwing off their disguise, and of giving Freedom the *coup de grace*.

Thus month rolled after month, the people basking in the belief of a perfect security, the government lulled to sleep by the assurances of England, while king Bomba was making formidable preparation for war.

The minister of foreign affairs was on one occasion summoned by the Parliament, in order to explain our political position with England. The functionary drew from his pocket a letter from Lord Palmerston, which read, that English men of war



were stationed in the waters of Messina for the only object of protecting the Island from a Neapolitan invasion.

I was conferring, late on the same afternoon with Marshall P., minister of war, on some affairs of my department, when an usher entered bringing a telegraphic dispatch. The brave and honest soldier in reading the missive turned as pale as death, and a tear dropped from his eyes. "Poor Messina," he exclaimed, "we are betrayed; read, Mr. Balzani."

The message was to the effect that the Neapolitan fleet had crossed the Strait, the troops were landing in great numbers, and as the city was unprotected they had commenced a work of devastation and carnage.

Messina was reduced to ruins; all those who could not fly were massacred, the hospitals were burned with their inmates, and a few men who went to seek refuge on board the English vessel were repulsed, and left the prey of the enemy. We had there only two battalions of soldiers, all young men from 16 to 20, and they sustained unflinchingly the first impetus of the enemy, falling, one after another, without yielding an inch. Only eight remained of two thousand. I was moved to tears when they presented themselves to the ministry, bearing their banner, saying: "There is our banner, we have been butchered, but we have saved our honor." The executive perceived, at this moment, their fault, but it was too late. They endeavored to gather the men of the revolution to save the country, but those men had lost their popular influence. On the other side the traitors at the head of the National Guard worked to countermine the now earnest ministry, and caused them to retire.

The Jesuits, who up to this time had worked secretly, now joined openly the reactionary party, spreading alarming and discouraging news.

We had only twelve thousand soldiers, commanded by a foreign officer. That general, perhaps through ignorance,



extended his operation in a line of fifty miles, so that when the Neapolitans advanced, they found little or no opposition. Taormina—the Thermopylæ of Sicily—was left unguarded. Catania was taken, sacked and burned ; and Syracuse, called, for its strong fortifications, the second Mantua, was given up, by the foreign commander, at the first approach of the enemy's steamer.

In this position of affairs, our President displayed the greatest activity. The first leaders of the revolution were recalled by the government. They, instead of censuring, exerted themselves in earnest work. The citizens awoke to the real danger, and there could be seen in every man the resolution to defend the Capital to the last. A traditional idea was called to the minds of the people. The enemies of the country have always found death and destruction at the gates of Palermo,—and they felt confident of being equal to their forefathers. But the city, through the influence of Palmerston, had been neglected, and not a fortification raised in the course of fourteen months. The greatest activity was used in fixing and arming the old tumbling down walls and bastions. But as the habitations had extended beyond them, other fortifications, on a larger scale, were necessary.

The city is encompassed from north to east by a semi-circle of high, rocky mountains, which form a barrier easily fortified, but at the eastern part, from the last mountain to the sea-shore, there is an opening of four miles in width. Here, the turn-pikes leading to the city were devoid of any fortification, and at the mercy of the coming enemy. The government sent forthwith military engineers to construct a line of fortifications from the mountains to the sea. But it was deemed impossible to perform this work, that required a year, in the short time that the enemy could employ in marching to Palermo.

I must introduce, at this point, a new personage, whose acquaintance proved to be providential to me. There lived next



to my sister's house, (which I made my abode at the time of the revolution,) a lady, with five sons and three daughters. She was the widow of an officer of the navy. Captain Monte—her deceased husband—was of noble origin. He had been a staunch liberal, and had served his country under the republic of Naples and under Murat. It may be understood that, although in the naval service of the Bourbons, he had trained his children with liberal views.

The lady was an excellent woman herself, and had well brought up her children. The young ladies joined to their beauty, that kind of innocent and unassuming amiability, which makes our women so charming. I esteemed them as sisters, and called there sometimes for a few minutes, to refresh myself when my mind was wearied. I found there one day a young man not older than sixteen. Signora Monti, in introducing him to me, said :

“ Mr. Balzani, I have given my sons to the service of the country. This one is the youngest ; he has travelled for two years in an American ship. He is come home now, on the news of our liberty. If you deem him able to serve his country, I give him unto you. Do with him as you would with a son. His name is Luigi.”

Luigi was a young man, rather handsome and well formed for his age. He had talent, activity, and that kind of unincumbered promptness which is acquired by living in a free country ; still he was dutiful and respectful. I was pleased with his frank behavior and his eagerness for fighting ; and became attached to him. As he had learned something about the management of cannon, I placed him in the artillery as an uncommissioned officer. Afterwards he was placed in the corps of marine, it being more congenial to him.

We shall see after a while how Providence chose this young man, to assist me in averting a dreadful doom.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE FORTIFICATIONS.

THERE appeared placarded in the streets of Palermo on the 15th of March, 1849, the following proclamation :

“ People, awake ! The time has arrived ! To-morrow will be commenced the work of the fortifications, and our hands shall accomplish it in a very short time. Every man who is willing to serve his country will join to-morrow at the *Piazza Vittoria* carrying a pickaxe, or a spade, a shovel, or a basket. He will take with him, for refecton, some bread and cheese.

“ Citizens ! If in 1848 we knew how to triumph, unarmed, in a great and unprecedented revolution, being now armed we will show to Europe, that, to the knowledge of military evolutions, we add that of making the fortifications which are to be defended by our muskets.”

This was not issued by any legal authority, but was the idea of a single citizen ; and so uniform was the thought of all classes, that with a common impulse no one deemed himself exempt from the appeal. In fact, the whole population went to work. Those nobles who conspired for the loss of the country busied themselves to appear the most conspicuous in it.

The seventeenth of March was a day of emotions and wonders. I could not believe my senses. I doubted, at some moments, if what I saw and heard were a reality, or a fantastic dream of my excited imagination. Oh ! I wish I were able to write a page which could truly relate what I saw, and portray with vivid colors that long line of four miles ! I would describe



that immense throng of people moving like an army, and with a single instinct, to the performance of a grand and magnificent work. I would sketch the hundred banners waving in the air, pick-axes, spades, shovels, hoes, mattocks, and other instruments borne by forty thousand men and women, whose heads were covered by the military cap, the hat of the National guard, the hood of the monk, the chapeau of the gentleman, the cap of the fisherman, and the bonnets, adorned with ribbons and flowers, which the ladies wore! I would animate this paper with the sounds of musical bands, of drums, of the instruments of work, blended with the melody of popular songs and war-like cries! I would give my readers the impression of the heroism displayed by that free people—of the beauty and enthusiasm of our women, and of the noble bearing of the representatives of the country!

All obeyed the military engineers as if they were their subordinates. It is difficult to condense into a brief sketch the different scenes that the whole line offered to view. All united to accomplish one purpose—all were animated by the same passion. The National Guard was represented at one place—and at another, the troops of the line: here were the fugitives from Messina with their women; there the peasants of the surrounding country, all vying with each other. Ladies of rank were seen bent under the weight of baskets full of earth. Tents were pitched at intervals, where were sold fruits, bread, and other refreshments. Some curates were seen wandering about with cart-loads of bread, to provide with food those who had none. Stout mountaineers, slender young fops, artisans, robust monks, old priests, and elegant maidens accompanied by their fathers, were observed breaking up the earth with various instruments, and removing it in their baskets.

The shouts of *Guerra! Guerra! Fuori! i Borboni!*—"War! war! Out with the Bourbons!"—filled at intervals the



air, and the echoes rebounded from the surrounding mountains.

Towards two o'clock two military bands arrived, and then commenced a dance, the equal of which had never been seen before. Friars of all orders danced with mechanics, gentlemen and soldiers; several thousands of heads were seen rising and lowering at the same time, clashing their instruments against each other's. There was a general exhibition of signs of affection, as of people who felt bound in a common cause. It was a moving spectacle to behold the soldiers of freedom pressing the citizens to their bosoms, in that land where it had been a crime for a soldier to smile at a civilian. A priest was raised upon the arms of several men, and, turning towards the sea, he cursed the king. This act was followed by shouts of approbation; but at the same moment an old gentleman called out to work, and all, as if stricken by remorse for the short time lost in merriment, returned with more eagerness to their suspended work.

When the sun was seen plunging into the western mountains the work was discontinued, and all marched back to the city in regular order, singing the national hymn and Bellini's song :

*"Bello e incontrar la morte  
Gridando Liberta."*

These scenes, the result of the most disinterested love for the country were renewed, until the work was accomplished. It took but a few days to complete the task which in ordinary times would have taken at least one year, and cost several millions of dollars. An English officer of a man-of-war which lay in the bay, on witnessing one of these day's work, with wonder exclaimed: "Verily, this people deserve to be free!" Noble and generous son of Albion! He did not know that his country was coolly meditating the downfall of that heroic people! He did not know that diplomacy bargains away the life



of the people, and counterpoises her scales with the blood of men.

A second Parga--the island of Sicily, which had confidently trusted her destinies to the diplomacy of England, was condemned to be stifled in her own blood, and given up treacherously to the horrors of the inquisition of the tyrant of Naples!—But this is a digression. . . . Let us return to our main narrative.

The royal troops were advancing towards Palermo, sacking and burning the towns which were in their way. Most of the superior officers of the National Guard and the Jesuits filled the city with terror, through their alarming speeches, still the people showed fight. Our noble and beloved president, being confident in the bravery of the Sicilians, was resolved to mount his horse and at the head of his people carry destruction amongst the Neapolitan army. He called in counsel, for this purpose, the colonels of the National Guard, which represented the whole population of the city. What was his astonishment in hearing from them that the guard did not intend to fight, and was contented to accept the general amnesty offered by the king! The excellent man called the men of the revolution and with a countenance stamped with grief he announced to us the fatal news, exhorting us to think for our personal safety. We remonstrated that it was the blackest slander ever uttered against a brave people; but he sorrowfully answered:

“I am bound to give credit to the constituted authorities!”

Fabio Malvica came the same evening to my house, with a well assumed frightened face, saying:

“Fly! fly! dear Alfio, for mercy’s sake! We are not secure in our houses any longer! The National Guard have plotted to attack the houses of the first leaders of the revolution to-night and kill them without mercy! I am going an exile to a strange land, but I could not quit this dear country without warning you of the imminent danger!”



I shuddered ; I felt a disgust, a loathing for the man who spoke these words to me, and answered in a freezing tone ; "A good journey, sir. I am not afraid of the people," and taking him by the hand led him to the door.

Similar arts were tried with others who had been conspicuous in the revolution, and a few were induced to fly.

On the following day the traitors spread a report among the National Guard, that the old man (meaning our dear president) was preparing for flight, leaving the people to themselves ; and that some of the men of the 12th of January (mentioning the names of those they had forced to fly) had already escaped. This threw the city into the greatest consternation. The president emigrated, and so did all the leaders of the 12th of January, drawing after them thousands of brave young men who had been in some office, and most of the representatives of the country. The last who left were the brave and noble patriots, colonels of the first regiment of infantry and of cavalry, and the secretary Mr. C. The first of these in taking leave of me, said :

"Fly, Balzani ! Your head is not secure on your shoulders !"

"No !" I answered with the calmness of despair, "no ! I will be present at the funeral of my beloved country !"

I was the only man of the revolution who remained. Still, I could not familiarize myself with the idea of leaving the country, so as to come to a resolution. I saw clearly the danger which hovered over my head, yet there was something seemingly supernatural, something like impelling destiny in me, which kept me bound to that soil, and restrained me from making the first step out of it. Conscious of having acted rightly towards men and my country, I stuck to the land of my fathers.

The city presented an aspect of appalling wretchedness ! There were neither rulers nor authorities. A mass of armed



men perambulated the streets, with countenances of stupified dread. It might have been called a state of anarchy if the least disorder had been committed. The leaders of the National Guard, who were still at their places, joined in a council, and promised the people a general amnesty. The myriads of tricolor flags had disappeared, the cannon were withdrawn into the fortress, and the fortifications which had a few days before presented a spectacle of the heroism and grandeur of a people remained mute. I walked along the streets in a state of dejection and desperation. The royalists stared at me with surprise for my audacity in remaining, and the people threw at me looks. . . Oh! those looks are always present to my mind! They were looks of appeal. They said: "Is it thus all over? Where are our leaders?"

What wounded my heart the most was the loss of honor on the part of my native place. Palermo had inaugurated the revolution and called the whole of Sicily to arms, the towns had all bravely answered, Messina had nobly endured sixteen months of bombardment, and been finally reduced to ruins; Catania sacked and burned, and now Palermo, which was so well armed, and able to destroy an enemy four-fold the number of the invading one, was to be seen giving up without firing a gun! This thought placed my mind in a state of distraction.

It was at the dawn of the following day that I went out without a destination or determination. The National Guards, trusting to a general pardon, proclaimed by their leaders, were under arms, with the order of firing upon any man who dared to raise the voice of war. On reaching the *Madonna del Cassaro*, I met a man who was a brave patriot, but who had not taken a leading part in the revolution. He was surprised at seeing me there, and exclaimed:

"You here, Balzani!"

"Even so!"

"Can we do anything to save the honor of our country?"



"I do not see any way," I answered gloomily. "Let us take a *carrozzina*, and ride towards the fortifications. May be, we shall see some signs of the advancing enemy."

On approaching the abandoned fortifications, we saw a man on horse-back, with a red cap on his head, galloping towards us in a cloud of dust.

"What news?" I asked, with anxiety, when the man was near us.

"Treachery!" exclaimed the rider. "Where the soldiers pass, they burn and massacre. Look, sir, that smoke rising from the top of that mountain. It is the village of Milicia on fire! Most of the people have been slaughtered!"

"Where are you going?" I asked

"To the city."

"If you wish for help, stop here ten minutes, and then enter, telling your tale to every one you meet."

"Let us go and do something," I said, to my companion, and ordered our driver to gallop back to the city. On entering *Porta Felice*, we alighted, and stopped talking in the middle of Cassaro.

It was usual, in those times, when two persons were seen speaking earnestly, for all the loiterers to cluster around and ask the news. Some fifty persons had already gathered in ten minutes, inquiring from us about the soldiers, and about the reality of the amnesty. I answered them, calmly, that until they saw the decree published, they must expect the entrance of the enemy during the night, sacking and firing the city.

Whilst my words were plunging the crowd into consternation, the man on horseback entered, shouting with tremendous voice—"Treachery!" On hearing the details, the people raised alarmed voices. This was the proper moment to make the last attempt. I unsheathed my sword, and placing myself at the head of those present, began to ascend the *Cassaro*, crying: "People! You are betrayed! There is no pardon! Defend your wives, your daughters, your children!"



People came from every corner asking questions, and others making explanations, which going from mouth to mouth made the news ten-fold more appalling ; and all joined the ferocious cries—*Guerra—Tradimento*.

We numbered already thousands when we reached *S. Antonio*. The first regiment of the National Guard was drawn in the street, and the colonel ordered them to fire ; but the captain on duty turned against him, with the words :

“ We will rather fire at you than at our brethren,” and all joined us.

In half an hour, the whole population was astir ; the fortifications were filled with armed people ; the disbanded soldiers went to their quarters ; and the *Marina* was full of groups carrying cannon and ammunitions. The panic ceased ; the flags were out again ; the war-songs were sung ; and the people proved themselves to be the same as of the days of the barricades. Oh, Palmerston ! How Macbeth-like must thou behold the shadows of the people thou hast betrayed ! How revengeful will they appear before thy eyes in thy last moments ! Make amend, at least, before the Angel of Death comes to sit by thy couch !

After a morning of exhausting work, to see every thing settled and in good order, I heard that the people had chosen a *Comitato*, and that I was the Secretary. There were no known active leaders, and I was determined to remain at the fortifications, when a score of men found me and took me by force to the City Hall, saying : “ You are our man, and you must see to our needs.” But, alas ! I found the General Commandant of the National Guard as president, and the *Comitato*—except four individuals—was composed of those who were betraying the country.

The people on the following day could not be restrained from passing the fortification and going to attack the troops on the mountains. The royal steamers approached, and a well armed



fire opened from our forts obliged them to retreat. Success even upon the mountains, crowned our volunteers. They attacked the soldiers on all sides, and drove them from their advantageous positions. But towards noon, messages commenced to reach the *Comitato* requesting food. But not a single loaf of bread was sent. Later they sent another message, entreating only for water. On the top of those mountains there was none to be had, and a hot day of fighting had made the men exhausted and mad with thirst. But even this innocent element was denied. The section of the *Comitato* destined to send bread and wine was composed of traitors.

Hunger, thirst and fatigue, compelled those brave men in the evening to retire to the city, and thus to abandon the position that they had taken with so much gallantry. The brave youth Luigi Monti had on that day, by himself, on the top of a mountain, managed a four pounder, which enfiladed the line of the enemy and helped the success of our warriors.

To give to every one his due, I must say that a French legion serving in our ranks, gave on that day proofs of bravery, but they were, for the above said reasons, compelled to retire to their quarters. The few good subjects who belonged to the *Comitato* on the following morning retired in disgust, and I took my musket and retired to the mountains, resolved to seek death amid the enemy. The people who had fought on the preceding day remained exhausted at home, and were replaced by fresh masses. The positions were retaken by us; and with the help of our mountaineers, who attacked the soldiers on the flank, we obliged the enemy to retire in disorder to other mountains, leaving the rocky fields studded with their wounded and dead. On that day I was struck by a spent ball on my knee, which though it did not cause any positive injury, obliged me to be carried home.

The same success crowned the people on the following day. In the afternoon a murmuring sound was heard in the streets.



Supporting myself on a cane, I went out to see what was the cause. I found the streets placarded with royal decrees, which conceded a general amnesty for political and public offenses, and promised a liberal administration. Not a single physiognomy was cheerful, and gloom was visible throughout. Those who spoke about it said: "What can we do! The *Comitato* approves it."

I became frantic with anger. I knew that after two days more fighting, the royalist army would be quite destroyed. I was beginning to exhort the people, when I felt a hand grasping my arm with force. It was Matteo, the reformed bandit chief. This man had kept his oath.

Since the first day of the revolution he had earned admiration and respect, through his bravery, and honest conduct. "What is the matter with you, Matteo?" I asked.

"Come with me!" he murmured, impressively.

Turning into a narrow lane, he pulled me into the entrance of a house, which chanced to be open. He then placed his hand on my shoulder and said:

"I entreat you, sir, to retire! The cause is lost. The Colonels S., M., P., and B., are in league with the royalists, and are among the people at this moment preaching submission."

"Why!" I exclaimed, frantically "The royal troops are almost annihilated! one day more and Palermo will have achieved one of the most splendid victories!"

"So it is," answered he.

"I was on the mountain this morning, and our people were victorious, but hungry. The position of affairs is now changed. They published those decrees as a last resource. The *Comitato* being composed of traitors, have bought the four men who were supposed to be patriots. You are alone, positively alone, sir, and you can do nothing."

"Let me see," I exclaimed, starting for the door, "if I am able to counteract the traitors, I will speak to the people."



“Since you will not listen to reasons,” said the man, calmly, “I will give you an argument which will prove irresistible. Suppose some one had promised *cent' once* (\$250,) to somebody for murdering you? In these moments of confusion it is very easy to pull a trigger. You have been these three days exciting the people with words and by example, and have succeeded in thwarting the plans of the traitors, and they have given a charge that you should not see the sun of another day.”

“No one would accept it,” said I, boldly.

“I did,” he replied, giving a peculiar stress to each word. “I did, to prevent anybody else from engaging in it. Now dear sir, let me entreat you to retire, since, doing otherwise you risk your life, without benefitting our country.”

On reaching the University I saw before it a throng of people, who were returning from the mountains, armed with muskets. The most of them were ragged. Their aspect was of men who had seen danger and death. Their unshaven, bloated sullen scowling faces, begrimed with gunpowder, perspiration and dust, impressed the mind with horror and dread. Their leader—a stout muscular man—had his gun hanging behind, and carried a salver, on which there were a few coins. With a weak voice that plainly showed exhaustion and fasting he called out at intervals—“citizens, we have done our duty, give us some bread.”

That episode, for one who knew the position of the city, was awe-striking. There were neither officers nor authorities, the links by which the different classes of society are bound were broken asunder.

These men amongst whom there were many reformed criminals, were virtually the masters of the city; still they begged for bread, to satisfy the cravings of hunger, to hold a life that they had, the whole day, bravely exposed in defense of their country. They knew that they had a right to it, but they did not dream of going to the houses of the wealthy; and asking



there boldly for the means of that day's life. Who could have hindered their plundering the mansions of the rich royalists? No! they begged! My heart was breaking at this spectacle, instinctively I would have sprung amongst them and kissed and blessed them, but a predominant idea rooted me to the spot. My eyes were filled with the tears of emotion, whilst despair filled my heart. Making the greatest of efforts I dragged myself home, exclaiming:

*Popolo divino!* How can human iniquity be so great as to betray you!

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### VÆ VICTIS.

THE dawn of the 16th of May, 1849, in Palermo, did not appear as smiling as it should in an Italian climate, the air of liberty did not breathe in the bosom of the citizens any longer; all was stillness.—The stillness of a cemetery! The people went about armed but stupefied. Neither dejection nor fear was written on their countenances, but complete amazement, as of persons who on awakening find themselves unexpectedly deprived of their all. The royalists on the other side looked as if they could scarcely realize their success, and took every move for a snare. In the streets a marketing was seen, where the citizens disposed openly of their arms. Muskets were sold for half or a quarter of a dollar. But who bought them?—More hopeful patriots who carried them out of town by cartloads.—And the government saw those transactions without stirring.

My position now was dreadful indeed. Being the only man of the 12th of January remaining in the country, and the mover and in some way the leader of the counter reaction which had



cost the royalists so dear and saved the city from being sacked, I could not feel tranquil. As for the general amnesty I did not entertain any trust in it. Escape was difficult, and pregnant with dangers. I therefore resolved upon a line of action that could not give the government any legal reason to pay up old scores. Conscious of my past conduct, I determined to brave the worst.

Our old friend Fabio Malvica, instead of going an exile to the land of strangers, as he had told me he would, had gone to the royalist army, and with them entered the city, invested with the dignity of counsellor of state. What was my surprise in receiving, on the very first evening, a note in which he said—"My dearest Alfio, I long to embrace thee."—This piece of impudence raised my wrath to the highest pitch, but consulting my safety, I conceived the best plan would be to go boldly, paying simulation with simulation.

Scarcely had he seen me before he encircled me in his arms, exclaiming—"Dear, dear, Alfio!"—I felt a loathing and horror as if I were in the coils of a snake.

"Dear Alfio," he continued, "you must still look at me as a real patriot. The prince of Satriano—the viceroy—is a liberal of old, and intends to surround the government with liberal and honest men. So constituted, our country will be happy. I sent for you to offer you the place of Intendente of the province of Trapani.\* You have only to sign a petition and I give you the decree of election."

I shuddered visibly.

"Nay, dear Alfio," he continued, with warmth, "do not shrink. What good did the revolution do you? Are you the richer for that? Will you not aid a paternal government to make the people happy and you yourself rich?"

I felt my power of endurance very near being overwhelmed,

\* Intendente corresponds to governor of the state and chief of the high police, together.



and in order to cut short the irritating cause, assuming the calmest manner I could I answered :

“ Mr. Counsellor . . . ”

“ Oh, call me Fabio ! Old names are so sweet ! ”

“ Fabio, then. You recollect that last year the parliament emanated a decree that no one should hold two offices. The minister accordingly summoned me to give up the office of the chancellory of the court of appeals, that which I held in the ministry being higher in honor and salary. I answered that I wished to retain as my own the place which I had earned through a long career, and that I deemed my sitting in the ministry of war a work that I was called upon to fulfill as far as my country had need of it.”

“ And you were fortunate in this,” interrupted Fabio, “ for to-morrow shall be published a royal decree ordering all the employés to return to the places they occupied on the 12th of January 1848, with the exclusion of those who gave up their old places, and who held a commission in the revolutionary army or a seat in the parliament. Thus you see you are not debarred from your old office, but even in the position of being placed in a brilliant career.”

“ I cannot feel,” I replied, “ but thankful for your friendly interest, but I am now so wearied of public life, that I feel forced to entreat you earnestly to let me return to my quiet and peaceful obscurity.”

“ If you wish it so,” he answered, in a displeased manner, “ so be it. But recollect, in all emergencies, that in me you have a powerful friend.”

Thus finished a conversation which was the test of my strength of mind and power of endurance.

On my return home, I found Matteo at the door.

“ Matteo ! For goodness sake ! ” I exclaimed, with alarm. “ You still in town ! Fly ! fly ! ”

“ I could not go without kissing your hand,” he answered.



"Come up stairs. How are you in funds?" I asked eagerly, when he was in my room.

"Very poorly," he answered, bitterly.

"Wait a moment," I said.

Hurriedly I ransacked my drawers and my pockets, and collecting all the money I could find, which was but a small sum, I put it into his hands, saying:

"Be good! Stain not the glory of your reformation! When this money is finished, send some one to me, and I will divide my bread with you; but, for the honor of the country, for your own honor, do not fall into temptation!"

It was surprising to behold that strong and brave man shed hot tears, whilst he forced my hand to his lips. He then, with a faltering voice, said:

"To make this money last longer, my wife and I will live on bread and water."

"May the blessing of the Almighty be upon you!" I exclaimed, whilst I saw his form receding through the door.

I thought that new attempts at revolution, were for half a century out of the question. The fall after so many glorious achievements was a lesson not to be obliterated from the minds of the present generation, and the mild policy professed by Malvica, would have put the seal on it. But king Ferdinand had need of blood—only blood would satisfy his thirst for vengeance. He had not succeeded in sacking and burning Palermo, and for this reason his cruelty became ferocious. Still, in the dark policy he adopted, there shone as a brilliant spark, the fear and respect he was forced to feel for that noble people.

On one side he ordered a complete disarmament, inflicting death on whoever kept in his possession any weapon or ammunition.\* On the other side, he gave offices to the few revolu-

\* Of fifty thousand muskets imported, only ten thousand were given up; and 37 cannons were wanting from the inventory of the artillery. They were all buried in the country.



tionary leaders who still remained in the country, and ordered a strict examination to be made of the acts of those who had managed any administration whatever.

To effect the latter, the chosen court not only called all the papers and documents from the offices, but invited, with promises of rewards, the citizens who had transacted business with the administration of the late department of war, to be cross-examined on the subject. Their aim was to convince the people, that the leaders of the revolution were no patriots, but bad men, who arose for the purpose only of enriching themselves, or venal men who served the highest bidder. The government was eagerly seeking the materials for such a demonstration, intended to induce the people, for the future, to mistrust all who spoke of revolution, and at the same time, to make them understand that it was impossible for a revolution to be sustained, no matter how successful it might prove at the commencement.

By this king Ferdinand implicitly confessed the goodness and honesty of the people. But the result of the scheme fell short of his expectation. The court charged with the examination of the accounts of the late administration, could not help making a report full of praises of the economy, honesty, and good behavior of the men of the revolution, with the exception of a few chiefs of squads, who had embezzled sums entrusted to them for the payment of their men. The most of these men were now employed in the new police, and the people, with their natural instinct of the right, loathed them and did not confound them with the patriots.

The prince of Satriano was angry at his discomfiture in his own plan and, kept the report secret. But as the favorable success of that investigation promised to be beneficial to the cause of tyranny, its failure was an inestimable moral triumph to the patriotic cause.

I was in a great state of alarm as to the issue of this exam-



ination. The slanders spread by the royalists against the patriots, had been so multifarious and so artful, that I thought, if not entirely, they would prove partly true. I therefore engaged a brave and trusty young man, who was employed in the office of the secretary of the court, to let me have, secretly, a copy of the report, whatever the purport might be. He who has true patriotic sentiments only can comprehend what were my feelings on reading in that paper the moral triumph of the revolution.

I lost no time in turning it to account. Many copies were written and sent to patriots throughout Sicily, in order to have them secretly circulated. The consequence was that every man of the revolution became known by the people in his true light, and many fair names, which had been tarnished by the foul breath of calumny, appeared, now, more luminous and radiant than ever.

We must now go back to the first days of the entrance of the troops into Palermo, to begin the narration of atrocious deeds, the equal of which have never been recorded, even in the times of Phalaris, Dionysius, Caligula, Nero, and other tyrants, who are quoted as examples of abomination.

King Ferdinand's passion was blood, and he ordered his minion, Satriano, to execute people every day. The latter entrusted this important mission to a captain of *Gendarmerie* called Maniscalco. This officer was a man of low origin, whose bad character and dissolute habits had dragged him to enlist in the hated body of *Gendarmerie*. His cruelties and diabolical inventions of torture, had gained him the commission of captain, and he now had entered Palermo as the supreme chief of police.

As the general amnesty deprived him from executing a daily butchery of the people, he found his expedients in the decree of disarmament. *Sbirri* went round searching houses, and where they found a pointed knife or an old rusty blade,



they arrested the father of the family and carried him to be shot.

Two farmers named Lia were shot, the *sbirri* having found on their farm the broken wheel of a cannon, fit only for fuel. Anger and terror spread throughout the island, and every one made the most diligent search on his premises to save his life. But diligence was of no avail ; the king wanted victims every day, and victims by all means must be had. Maniscalco pointed out one or two persons every day to his satellites who stealthily threw a dagger or a cartridge into the houses of the victims, and then under pretence of finding the introduced object, they carried the man to execution. Our acquaintance Zecca, the Zingaro, was shot for there having been found a broken blade under his bench.

Alas for those who were personal enemies of the officers of Maniscalco, or of the adherents of Satriano. In the small towns the cruelties reached to the level of barbarity. A line of soldiers took the prisoner from the neighboring jails to the principal square ; there they caused him to kneel, shot him, and went their way, leaving the corpse to the dogs ! Woe to him who dared to murmur, or raise an audible sigh. The confessional was not exempt from heinous perfidy. A priest asked an innocent girl in the act of confession if her father had any concealed weapons ; the girl turned pale and denied ; the confessor threatened excommunication and curses for a lie uttered at that sacred moment. Made sure by the attestations of the priest of the sanctity and inviolability of the secret of confession, she trusted to his ears the place where her father had buried a musket, thus she obtained the absolution. The half hour employed by her to say her prayers and take the communion was sufficient for the *sbirri* to dig up the musket and carry her father to execution.

As one may expect, those daily cruelties caused a general though subdued murmuring of the people, which was seized



on by Maniscalco as a loyal excuse for beginning other and new atrocities.

Arrests began to be made during the night under pretence of conspiracy. I will not sadden here the heart of my reader with the description of terrible dungeons and fiendish inventions of torture ; I only say that of those arrested, some not being able to endure the atrocious torments, chose rather to be shot, owning offenses they had never committed ; some died under the infliction of the torture, and some—the strongest—survived, to drag out a miserable and useless life.

The state of the island presented the appalling spectacle of direful, fierce, cowardly vengeance of the king against the liberals, and of the royalists against their enemies.

The reader must certainly wonder how I, having played a rather noticeable part in the revolution, should have remained unmolested. And this is very natural ; I was myself affected by the same surprise. Musing many times on this subject, I could partly solve the riddle, by the help of my self-esteem, in this manner :

The king wanted blood every day, and nothing else. Amid the general wreck of liberty it was in the arbitrary power of his myrmidons to choose their victims, and they were guided by their feelings of personal animosity. In my revolutionary life I did not put on any airs of superiority, neither did I molest or hurt any one's feelings. On the contrary, I saved the lives of several of our enemies, and as far as my power could reach, no one of my countrymen who applied to me went away without obtaining a favor. Thus, treacherous self-esteem whispered those reasons to my ears, and comforted me to remain tranquil. Still I was doomed to undergo a keen and subtle torture of new invention

The Attorney General of the Court in which I sat was a coarse, vulgar and wicked man. He belonged to the class of fierce royalists, and enjoyed the common opinion of having



reached that important position by having served through a long life as a spy, and by immoral services rendered to the dissolute viceroys.

He was a stout and ugly man. When he entered the Court, before the opening of the session his wicked eyes rested on me, and with a vulgar sarcasm he addressed me: "Chancellor, how are you to-day?—Do you know the news?—two rascals shot to-day—very few, indeed!—The heroes of the revolution ran away, and left others to pay for them—The *Patres Patriæ*!—The robbers! Thieves!—Have you any muskets hidden?"—He always concluded with offering me a pinch of snuff, darting a grim, fiendish smile of malignant triumph. I had the firmness never to answer, although the fury raging in my bosom made me writhe in my chair.

One day, instead of addressing me, he went straight to the President, and with wrath written on his countenance, said: "Do you know, President, what the *Patres Patriæ* did? All the judges looked at him earnestly. I started not so much at his words, (I had become accustomed to them) as at the peculiar look and tone which accompanied them. His eyes were darting fire, his lips quivering, and his hands were nervously clutching.

"Listen," he continued, "when the good prince of Satriano was on the mountains near Palermo to restore peace and order, the few rebels who belonged to the *Comitato* had a private meeting and resolved upon mining different spots where his Excellency with his faithful troops had to pass, and the affair was so well combined that very few could have escaped. I am horrified at the thought! The prince has had all the papers of the late department of war examined; no paper is missing but that protocol. Oh, if it is found, the amnesty will not save the man who signed it!"

The reader will understand how my blood froze, when he knows that that minute had been signed by four, I being secre-



tary ; and that when I last retired from the *Comitato*, I had put it into my pocket, and it was now in a drawer in my house. He turned towards me, and fastened his fatal, cat-like eyes upon my face. I could not help fixing my looks on him, and I felt as if he had read my soul, and were already in possession of my secret. Still, with a giant effort I nerved myself, and pretended to be busy in preparing my papers.

My life, except in the hours of the Court, was passed in perfect seclusion, pining over the destiny of my beloved country and the wretched situation in which I was. My friends, Antonio and Ettore, had retired to a solitary life on the mountains ; Giuseppe, Andrea and Onofrio, had gone into a voluntary exile, and I alone remained to witness the enormities committed upon my countrymen, and to live in a continual trepidation for my own safety.

And now I must stop writing, and, God knows if I shall be able to fulfil my task to the end.

The news of the arrival of General Garibaldi in Sicily has re-awakened all my feelings and aspirations. But alas ! It was decreed in heaven—man shall never be happy. The bad state of my health forbids my going. Oh, my poor heart—how it throbs !

My beloved country ! Only one of thy children does not run to thy appeal ! Friends, home, the soil which I once trod, the places and spots where I witnessed so much bravery, my most intimate and dearest friends encircling the liberating hero, my dear Onofrio fighting heroically and losing his life on the mountains of Calatiformi, and Garibaldi ! the hero of heroes, with whom I have spent the happiest hours of exile, all rise vividly before my eyes ; and whilst this vision makes me happy for the certain liberation of my country, it makes me scorn myself for not being with her !

There is no longer repose nor rest for me ! The dream of my life is shattered ! What is life without an aim but a slow



and painful dragging towards the tomb ! The golden vision of rescuing my country, once so blissful to my yearning eyes, is but a faded dream ! The country, so dear to me, because it shelters the bones of my ancestors, but a thousandfold much dearer for the pains that it cost me, is lost to me for ever ! I shall not visit any more the cemetery, where the bones of my martyred father rest ! I shall never have the courage to appear before my countrymen ! What have I done for my country ? Nothing ! I have no longer a right to partake of her freedom, acquired by the shedding of so much noble blood !

A voice of woe echoes through my soul like the wind as it sighs and wails through the forest, bringing waste and desolation—thou shalt remain like a broken feather whirling at random in this dusty and freezing air !

I have for ten years endured, with uplifted head, the direst sufferings of exile, and never has my heart repined or my mind repented my last attempts at revolution ; but now, oh, how I regret it ! for they have tossed me far, far from my beloved country !

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE CEMETERY.

ONE day on retiring from the court, my valet said to me :  
“ There is a monk in the library who has been waiting for you this hour. It looks suspicious, because he hides his face, and I have not been able to have a glimpse of it.”

As in those times every unusual thing, though slight, foreboded evil, I entered the library, my whole frame trembling with anxiety and apprehension. In the middle of the room was standing a fat monk about five feet in height. He was dressed



in a gown of coarse brown wool reaching to his ancles, and tied by a rope at the waist. A rosary was hanging at his side. A cowl of the same material was drawn on his face, leaving visible only a long, grey beard. On seeing me he bowed so as to better conceal his face, and extending hesitatingly his right hand, in which he held a letter, he uttered in subdued tones :

“ It is secret.”

“ Hold on !” I said, with a quick firm tone, “ I do not accept mysterious messages. Up with that cowl !”

At those words my valet appeared at the door ready for any emergency, and the monk turning so as to give his back to the door, raised his hood and exposed to my sight a round, red face, with a pair of small brilliant eyes. My first impulse was to burst into a peal of laughter, but noticing the presence of the valet I waved my hand for him to retire, closed the door, and taking the monk by the hand, I said :

“ What is it, Gregorio, you are the last man, whom I expected here ; what is this ?”

Gregorio, whom the reader may recollect as the old cook of bishop D., placed his first finger across his lips, and said : “ Read.”

The note contained these words :—“ To night at twelve, come to the Sylva of the dead.”

“ What is in the wind ?” I asked, puzzled.

“ I can’t tell exactly, but you may trust, because it comes from trusty hands.”

“ But at twelve in the night, and at such a place ?”

“ The place is secure, only there is a little risk in going.”

“ Why did you try to hide your face ?”

“ For the times in which we live I would have preferred to deliver the note safely into your hand, without being recognized.”

It needs hardly be told that I comprehended that the nature of the affair was political. I quickly fell into a train of



thought, the many dangers I had to incur by my going to the appointment, being the theme. Sad misgivings seized upon me. Still my liberal aspirations were already stirred within me, and I fell into a chaos of emotions. Gradually, however, I subsided into a more subdued frame of mind, and raising my head I asked calmly :

“ Who gave you this mission ? ”

“ Father Carmelo.”

“ Who is to be there ? ”

“ Persons of quality who have come here from different cities. Your presence is necessary. I know nothing else.”

In a moment my fears were forgotten and my resolution taken.

“ Go in peace, Gregorio,” I uttered in a peremptory tone, “ I shall be at the Sylva of the dead at twelve o’clock ! ”

Scarcely had the monk gone before my valet entered and handed me a packet of letters, saying : “ Captain G. Tortorici brought them this morning.”

These letters came from my friends, refugees in Genoa, Marseille, Malta, England, and other places. Their tenor was that a general revolutionary movement was meditated, and the general wish of all the Committees was that Sicily should take the lead in this, as she did in that of 1848. These letters fortified me the more in the resolution taken.

My reader has certainly surmised that the spot appointed in the mysterious letter was a burial place. Let me here describe the manner in which the Sicilians dispose of their dead. The cemetery for the poor in Palermo is an enclosed field out of the town, filled with stately cypresses, planted in regular order, and with a chapel in the midst.

Three hundred and sixty-six large white marble flag-stones cover the pits in which the needy are buried. The date of each day of the year is engraved on each one of those stones, and they are opened for use successively as they are marked, so that each is opened but once in the year.



The visitor would have uselessly looked for a monument in that lonely and gloomy place before 1837. But as in that epoch, the cholera mixed rich and poor, side by side, in a common grave, monuments, mausoleums, and cenotaphs are now found interspersed among these stones.

This common cemetery occupies an interesting page in the chronicles of the country, it being the spot where the Sicilian Vespers broke out. In those times it was a place of worship.

For those who can afford even a small expense, the method of disposing of their dead is entirely different. The corpses are prepared and embalmed for six months, in such an ingenious manner as to preserve the skin, muscles, and hair. They become as hard as leather; their color is dark, and many retain a strong likeness of what they once were.

In several convents, large subterranean galleries, with rows of niches, in several tiers, all around to the ceiling, are filled with bodies so preserved. They are fully dressed, and stand upright on their feet. A label hangs at their feet, with the name of the deceased and the epoch of his death. A monk keeps the place, eating, sleeping, and passing there the most of his life.

There exist, besides, several associations for the purpose of preserving their own dead, and for which there have been built cemeteries, in the like manner, out of the city.

The friends or relatives of the dead bring, on all saints day, two wax tapers, which are burnt for a little while before each body. This is a kind of requisition made by the monks. If a body is left for two years in the dark, it is deemed an abandonment; a new inmate is substituted in the niche, and the old tenant is put into a common grave.

This method of burying is very ancient. In the remote centuries, when it was first used, it was an improvement on that of the Egyptians, for no expensive drugs are needed, and the body remains for centuries. There is no unpleasant odor perceptible.



A person who descends, for the first time, into one of these homes of the dead, cannot help feeling awe-struck. This first impression over, the aspect of those hideous faces, the motely assemblage of centuries and of different ranks, give rise to meditation. For highly educated, spiritual men, the sight of these venerable remains is really disgusting, for it evinces how tenaciously people *cling to the mere casket of life*, instead of rejoicing in the idea of the *glorious truth of another existence*. but unfortunately men of this stamp are relatively few in this world, whatever be their civilization. The majority of human kind are matter of fact, and for these, it is almost impossible to arrive at an idea of that abstract truth, without starting from a material object. They must needs have a material impression to awaken their meditative powers.

On visiting the gorgeous and romantic Greenwood, the elevated mind, allured into spiritual reveries, communes with the souls of the departed ones, with reverential awe, and a holy longing takes possession of the heart, to imitate the deeds of brave and upright men. This happens to the few. The mind elevated to such a lofty sphere does not condescend to meditate upon vices and wickedness.

On visiting our cemeteries, the hideous aspect of those whom we knew in the splendor of beauty, and in the array of vanity and pride, teaches us a lesson. Those dumb orators on human fragility remind us of the clay of which we are made, and to which we have to return. Their eloquence strikes to the heart, and is more convincing than that of the best preacher. Nature speaks to nature! The sight of that miserable casket, once like our own, curbs our vanity and makes us think of its inmate fled to eternity. Hence an earnest desire arises of correcting our faults, and of preserving our soul pure for the blessed hereafter. Many good people visit those places once a month to meditate.

As an illustration of the difficulty of conforming the mind in



practice to the abstract, I will relate an incident. I once called on my good and learned friend, Mr. T., the very gentleman who, moved by noble sentiments, had written words of indignation about our mode of keeping the dead. I found him inconsolable, because he had been robbed. "I do not care a straw," he said to me, with his usual earnest goodness, "for the costly things they have taken from me; but I am distressed for some trifling objects which can be of no use to any one, whilst for me they were of paramount interest. They were memorials of my parents, and a great many family remembrances were associated with them!" I could not help sympathising with all my heart with the sorrows of my noble friend; but at the same time, his book recurred to my mind, and with it the reflection: if a faded flower, a ring, a prayer-book, or any trifling object whatever belonging to one who was dear to us, has such an inestimable value, how much more precious must his very remains be!

In truth, the first time one comes in sight of the remains of those once so loved, the impression is heart-crushing. But the first sensation over, one becomes familiarized with it, the former lineaments come out more distinctly; fancy embellishes and restores them to their former existence; old associations arise; and the feelings of by-gone days are for a while renewed, blended with a sense of mortality and awe. Thus the passion, that death with its cold hand had covered with ashes, rekindles with soft and melancholy heat, the matter serving as the tinder to reanimate tender affections, and guide to Christian life!

How many, beautiful and young, matron-like women are seen, after the loss of their companions, dedicating themselves entirely to the education of their children, waiting for the day when they will be allowed to join their beloved one!

Let us now resume our narrative, which is approaching its close. As the midnight hour drew near, it found me closely wrapped in my cloak, wending my way through gardens and



by-paths to the Sylva of the Dead. The moon was shining brilliantly, and I had to avoid the turnpike so as not to be met by the patrols. No moving object could I perceive but my own shadow, and those of the wind-moved boughs which flitted like phantoms on the ground. Now and then, I stopped under a tree, turned round, and earnestly gazed in all directions; then I laid down, and placed my ear on the ground—all was silent except the invisible wind which was audible at intervals. The furious barking of dogs apprised me of the proximity of a hut or farm-house, and obliged me to retreat cautiously, in order not to create an alarm. The wind at once abated, the air grew more chilly, and onward I went, till I reached the place of my destination.

The Sylva of the Dead is an enclosed ground filled with centurial cypresses in regular files. I found its iron gate ajar and entered stealthily. Here was a stone seat, and there a small pillar with a fresco painting of the holy passion, or of figures representing souls burning in the fire of purgatory. Yonder was a grated square opening, corresponding to the under vaults. These objects, conducive to meditation and prayer, were found at every turn of the cypress avenues. One could catch, at a short distance, through vacant spaces between the trees, glimpses of a gothic chapel illuminated by the silvery radiance of the moon. I looked eagerly on all sides, but could not perceive a single person. A bat wheeled swiftly about me for a few times, and then disappeared.

The dreariness of the place, made more so by its mournful associations, the solemnity of the hour, the silence of the night, and the mystery of my errand, all joined to impress my soul with awe, and to immerse my mind in meditation.

“How many hundred of generations,” I thought, whilst slowly pacing the ground, “are buried under the spacious vaults beneath my feet! How many learned, brave, noble and patriotic men are no more! What is life, after all?”



At this moment the large bell of the clock of the cemetery tolled the hour of midnight, with a gloomy sound which rebounded, echoing from mountain to mountain.

“Very wisely,” I said to myself, “they placed on this spot an ingenious contrivance, which warns the living, that one hour of life is passed, and one step more is made towards eternity! Happy are those who have no reason to fear this fatal approach!”

At this moment, a tap on my shoulder startled me.

“Hasten! they are all down stairs,” was uttered by the well known voice of Gregorio.

“Lead the way, I will follow you,” I answered, now feeling really the dread of the situation in which I was.

The monk went first to bolt and lock the gate, and then proceeded to the chapel.

Although there was no lamp in the place, every object was discernible through the pale and fantastic light caused by the moonbeams across the parti-colored panes.

The chapel was of octagonal form. A stone altar surmounted by a large wooden cross, fronted the door, and a row of unpainted benches were placed against the walls. Two biers, in the form of litters, stood on one side, with faded coverings, which were once damasks, and several spades and pick-axes lay in another corner.

On the left of the altar was a door, leading to a staircase, which the monk descended and I followed, feeling with my foot at every step, because now every gleam of light had disappeared. At the end of a second flight of steps, another door was pushed open and we entered the first gallery or sepulture, which was also dark. I was obliged to take hold of the monk's gown, in order not to stumble over some skull on the pavement, or run against one of the inmates of the niches. On turning a third gallery I saw a dim light. At the farthest extremity was a small, stone altar, and two semi-circular stone seats,



used, in by-gone days, by monks, as a place of prayer. Upon the altar was a square glass lantern, which cast its light on a skull and cross bones, placed in the centre.

Twenty individuals sat around in profound silence wrapped in their cloaks, and the tall commanding figure of father Carmelo was standing erect on the step of the altar, with his left hand resting and near the skull. The pallor of his face, the rigidity and solemnity of his countenance, and the stillness of his muscles, completed the awe which the place inspired.

When I approached the altar, Gregorio retired with the words, "I go to keep watch in the Sylva."

The twenty persons seated, were gentlemen of high distinction, belonging to different cities of the Island. They were patriots who not having in 1848 placed themselves in a prominent position, were unprosecuted by the chief of police. I knew the most of them, and the best among them, that dear young man, Bentivegna, who had saved my life at the boar hunt several years before. He had come to Palermo, in 1848, at the head of three hundred brave mountaineers, and had then a seat in Parliament as the representative of the city of Corleone.

On my approach all showed their faces and were in the act of extending me their hands, when they were arrested by the solemn voice of father Carmelo saying :

"Son of Pietro Balzani, the hour has come for you to fulfil your vow ! The glass which marks, grain by grain, the fall of good citizens, is nearly exhausted ! These brave patriots have assembled here to-night from distant cities to concert a remedy ! For life or death we belong to our country ! The people everywhere are in a state of desperate exasperation, what they want are brave and honest leaders."

"I am with them," I answered, "soul and body, and with so much the more pleasure because you are at the head of us."



"No," answered the monk, "this cannot be. The office of President is one of the greatest danger and responsibility, and must devolve on a man of society. I am a solitary monk, and what I can promise with certainty is the armed hands of two hundred stout friars. I shall help in the work with all my power, but the President must be one of you."

"Alfio Balzani!" cried twenty mouths in a breath.

"Amen," responded father Carmelo.

At this unexpected acclamation I felt a holy thrill of enthusiasm and transport pervading my soul. With a bound I reached the altar, and placing my hand on the skull, I exclaimed:

"Brothers! the place that you assign me is fraught with appalling dangers! I embrace it with all my heart and soul! I swear upon the bones of my martyred father, not to desist from my work, while I have life, until I shall see my country free!"

At my words all rose; twenty-one shining blades flashed in the air, and the same number of voices cried—"We also swear!" when a terrible voice was heard at the other end of the gallery: "Imprudent men; the sword of the tyrant hangs over your necks?"

The immense enthusiasm of the assemblage changed to once into a fearful confusion and dread. Gregorio advanced hurriedly toward us, (he it was who had spoken,) and with a look of alarm, muttered, in a tremulous voice: "The enclosure is surrounded with soldiers, and a large number of *sbirri* are knocking at the gate."

"We are in a trap;" I said, "well if we must fall, let our lives cost dear to the minions of Maniscalco, we will not fall in their hands alive!"

"If you will be calm and make no confusion," interrupted Gregorio, "there is some hope of safety, but be composed and do not stir, minutes are precious."



So saying he approached a niche, and touching a secret spring it revolved, together with its standing occupant, and exposed to our sight an aperture by which a man could hardly enter.

We passed the aperture, one after another, the last being Gregorio with his lantern. The niche revolved anew, to its former position, with the sharp sound of the closing spring, and we found ourselves in a grotto, not higher than seven feet nor larger than ten.

The air was so damp and chilly that I would have made my blood freeze if it had not been stirred by alarm and excitement.

"Let us hasten," said Gregorio, hurriedly, "because if they know with certainty that persons have gathered here, and they do not find any one, as there is no apparent way of escape, I should not wonder if they should knock down all the dead and find our retreat."

So we hurried speechlessly through that dismal grotto, sometimes ascending and at other times descending, as if we were plunging into the bowels of the earth. The grotto now contracted into a narrow hole in which was visible the mark of the chisel used by the hand of man to make it wider, and then it enlarged into spacious caverns, whose fantastically shaped basaltic rocks, adorned with chrysolites and hanging stalactites, sparkled in the light of the lantern like emeralds and diamonds. Our walk was sometimes down an inclined plane, and then it turned at once into an ascent difficult to climb, and so varied continually. In some places we were almost stifled by the lack of air, and then a refreshing breeze from some crevices in the mountain above us restored us to vigor.

We had performed about a couple of painful miles, when we heard a noise of falling water. The sound increased as we advanced. Gregorio walked or crept in the van with his lantern,



and seemed not to take notice of it. Bentivegna broke the silence, asking him from what that noise proceeded. Gregorio turned his head to us, and, with an encouraging look, said : " It is a cataract that we are going to meet ; beyond that we are surely safe." The grotto began now gradually to become larger, and the path smooth with a gentle descent, and the air was cooler and damper until we reached a point where it seemed as if all progress were stopped. A large sheet of water, coming from a point on the right, some fifteen feet above our heads, fell with a tremendous noise into an abyss. It was a subterranean stream ; one of those cataracts which dash in torrents in the bowels of the earth. We stopped and looked at each other with amazement. Gregorio at this point spoke thus :

" We must pass under this water. The foam and mist conceal a passage two feet wide. There is a log placed on the side of the precipice, but the path is so slippery that a false step would with certainty carry one into the chasm. Attention and order will save us. I will go the first with the help of this pointed staff—do you follow me, the first taking hold of the cord of my belt, and the others holding firmly each other's hands."

Gregorio led the way with his staff, handing to the next the end of the knotted rope which he used as a belt. We went cautiously one after another under the foaming water, and in a few minutes we were safely on the other side.

This part of the grotto was also spacious, but of steep ascent. When we reached a point where there was a turn, and fresh air poured in, Gregorio placed the lantern on the ground and said :

" Now, my masters, it is time for rest. Your limbs are tired and your strength exhausted, and we have still a steep ascent to surmount. Give me one of your watches ; I will awake you in one hour."

We stretched ourselves to rest, but in the state of nervous excitement in which we were we could not close our eyelids.



Whatever my physical weariness, five minutes of rest have always been sufficient to recruit my strength. After the lapse of this time I began to think of our conspiracy, and seeing that my companions did not sleep, I proposed to discuss our plan of action.

It was resolved that each of us, in our respective towns, should choose a *Comitato* of trustworthy men; that each member should put himself at the head of other *Comitatos*, the members of the latter doing the same, and so on, until the conspiracy embraced all true men.

The strictest secrecy should be kept with regard to the personelle, so that if the tortures inflicted by Maniscalco should compel any one to disclosures, he could hurt only a few. I was to be the centre of all the *Comitatos* both in town and country.

The most difficult matter was how to manage the correspondence. After having proposed many plans and rejected them as not safe, father Carmelo took the responsibility on himself.

"The monks," he said, "are constantly travelling, on foot, from town to town, and as they do not excite suspicions, they will carry the letters."

I concluded by recommending them to be cautious, self-possessed, energetic, and discreet, for, not only our own lives but thousands of others, and the success of our enterprise, depended upon our actions. We then resumed our way, and after an hour of steep, tortuous, and very wearisome ascent, the cool fresh air which rushed in and reanimated us, announced the vicinity of an outlet and the end of our toilsome journey.

Monto Cuccio is a mountain of conical form, four miles distant from Palermo. The naturalists assert that it must have been a volcano, but at what epoch no one can say, because there is no historical record on the subject. On the top of that mountain are still seen the remains of a splendid castle and palace built by William the first, with beautiful frescoes



still remaining on the ruined walls. It was there we found ourselves at the end of our subterranean peregrination. The dawn of day was near, and father Carmelo said :

“ Now, my brothers, is the time to part, before the laboring people can observe us issuing from this desolate place. We shall reach Morreale singly at an hour when the patrols have all retired. Let us separate in the name of God !”

After having, in the best manner we could, cleaned our soiled and torn garments, we separated, some of us never again to meet in this world.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A NEW CONSPIRACY.

My first and most difficult task was the choice of men. I had fresh in my memory the sad experience of the last revolution, where, from the ambition and love of gain of a few of the leaders, our cause had received its *coup de grace*. Wherefore, I set my choice upon those whom I had seen fighting bravely at the commencement of the last revolution, and who had retired without seeking any office in compensation. Disinterestedness and self denial are the true touchstones of man. Being well acquainted with the personelle of my countrymen, in a few days I easily made up my *Comitato*, which was composed of thirty men, amongst whom were the following individuals :

Nicolo Garsilli, a young lawyer, the son of a fierce royalist. This young man was one of the eight hundred brave Sicilians who had been taken prisoner in Calabria and sent to the prison in Naples. When his father heard of the circumstance he went to Ferdinand the Second, and kneeling at his feet, implored the king to grant him the favor of having his son shot for the



offence. Ferdinand, tyrant as he was, felt some horror at this unnatural request, and smiling bitterly, he said : " Go, Captain Garsilli, I need no such proofs of your fidelity."

Domenico Caldara, a perfumer, young, calm and brave ; Vincenzo Mondino, a builder, resolute, but as deaf as a post ; the Chevalier F—x—a, a patriot, of whose courage and loyalty I had the surest evidence ; a priest, whom I shall call Father Cialdoni ; a young physician, country born, but practising in Palermo, and whom I shall refer to as the Doctor ; my brother, Vincenzo ; and an old man, of whom I must speak more particularly, to vindicate his character for patriotism, which suffered unjustly. His name was Nicolo D—o, he was about seventy years of age, and was a lawyer in the police courts. His family consisted of a wife and two daughters.

During the revolution he had never asked or received an office ; and, as the police court had, of course, been abolished, he, with his family, had suffered considerably. Knowing the man thoroughly, immediately after the royalists had entered Palermo, I went in search of him, and found him suffering from indigence.

On seeing me he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes : " Alas, our poor country ! All hope is lost !"

" Would you be willing," I said, " to make a great sacrifice for your country, even to having your honor suspected ?"

" Explain yourself," replied he, drawing himself up with dignity.

" Before the revolution," I answered, " you were intimately acquainted with all the royalist generals who have now entered Palermo. Will you renew and continue this intimacy, crying down the patriots, and by complaining of your utter ruin, gain their confidence ? This you can easily do, as you never held an office under the revolution."

" But I will be called a traitor, a spy !" he answered, shuddering.



"That is the sacrifice which I would ask you to make. Consider, before you refuse, of what immense service you could become in saving the lives, perhaps, of your brother patriots, by your timely warning or assistance. Time will clean your name, and show at its true value the service you render to your suffering countrymen. And I solemnly promise, if I live, to proclaim to Sicily your true patriotism, and the enormous sacrifice you make to it." He considered for a few moments, then placing his hand in mine, said, emphatically :

"I will do it. You have my promise."

In a few days this secret organization had spread throughout Palermo, the more readily on account of the savage cruelties committed by the police. The government became aware of it, not because there was an informant, but from that general movement which is inevitably seen in a people when about to make an effort to throw off a burden which has become too heavy to be borne. The lower classes of women, whilst conversing in the streets could be seen raising their fingers menacingly at a passing *sbirro*, or muttering some words, such as, your time will soon come, your play will be short, there is a *Comitato* now, and a hundred other such expressions, which, although but half heard by the *sbirri*, speedily aroused in them suspicion of a new conspiracy.

That heroic old gentlemen, Signor Nicolo, had acted well his part. Not only had he renewed his intimacy with the Generals ; but, he also managed to insinuate himself into the good will of the inspectors of police and the *sbirri*, by complaining of the revolution in such a manner that they believed him to be one of their most faithful adherents, and imparted to him all their suspicions, and their plans for putting down the suspected outbreak.

The central *Comitato* never met together. I saw the members singly at different places, meeting them apparently as friends. By this means we escaped detection.



Garsilli and Francesco P., who were lawyers, came to my house every other morning, before court hours, as if on business. In the evenings I would call on Signor Nicolo, where I would meet with Mondini Caldara and Padre Cialdoni. We could meet there without fear, as Signor Nicolo was thought to be a staunch royalist and above suspicion, so that the few who went there did not give any umbrage to the police.

The *sub-comitatos* were arranged in the following manner : Every member of the chief *Comitato* engaged ten men of which he became the president, each one of these engaging ten more, in their turn becoming chiefs, and so on. As the members never met collectively with the chief, (he meeting them singly when occasion required) if any one of the members should happen to be arrested, and forced to a confession, by the cruel and terrible torture, he could do but little harm, as he only knew his chief and the ten men composing his own *sub-comitato*. Thus all knew there was a supreme *Comitato*, but not who composed it.

I had a list of the names of all the *sub-comitatos* ; but in practice they were always designated by numbers.

One morning Signor Nicolo came to my house with fright depicted on his countenance, and told me that on the preceding night fifty men had been arrested, amongst whom was a member of our chief *Comitato*, the Chevalier F. X. This news filled me with anxiety and grief.

"Are you sure of it?" I asked.

"Very sure, as I read his name on the list this morning. We shall all be lost, for how can he resist the torture?"

"No!" I interrupted—"we need not fear. I know the metal of that brave young man; he will die, but he will not speak."

That morning I went to court, my mind filled with misgivings, and my heart agitated by a thousand fears.

On leaving the hall at three o'clock, I met my friend Fran-



cesco Calagno. On seeing me he expressed surprise at my agitated countenance.

"I have worked hard to-day," I replied, "and I suppose that causes me to look so haggard."

"By the by," said he, "my brother has more than once expressed a wish to see you. He will never forget you rendered him a great service in the first days of the revolution."

At these words an idea flashed on my mind, and I at once took my determination.

"At what hour can I find him at home?" I asked, with an unconcerned air.

"At any time," he answered, "as he is ill."

It is now necessary that I should introduce my reader to Antonio Calagno, the brother of my friend Francesco. He was a small, slim man, with a sallow complexion, short arms and rickety limbs. His head was large, his face narrow and flattened in at the sides, leaving prominent a long, sharp nose. His two little grey eyes, bright with malice, were kept constantly scintillating with quick, suspicious glances. He was related to Maniscalco, and from the first day of the entrance of the latter into Palermo, they had been inseparable. In the position that Maniscalco occupied, a cruel, perverted and naturally wicked heart was not sufficient; he had need of talent and learning, in order to give the appearance of legality to his cruelties, which cried for vengeance before God and man. Besides, he was ignorant of the *personelle* of the city. These wants Calagno supplied admirably, he being well learned in matters of law. Thus if Maniscalco was dreaded as the butcher of the people, Calagno was hated as the director of those bloody transactions. He lived in the same house where, at the risk of my personal safety, I had saved his life and property on the third day of the revolution. I hastened my dinner, and then called on him. On entering his parlor I was surprised at finding there all the chiefs and sub-chiefs of police sitting in a circle.



Calagno sat at the head of the circle in a low, easy chair, lined with black leather. He was wrapped in a cloak and so buried between the two arms of the seat that his head only could be perceived. On seeing me, he exclaimed :

“ Oh, Balzani ! welcome ! Sit by my side,” and stretching from the folds of his cloak a crooked, skeleton-like hand, he grasped mine feebly, and addressing his satellites he added :

“ Gentlemen, Mr. Balzani is my best friend. I owe him a debt of gratitude. He was one of the leaders of the 12th of January, but he was deluded and lured on by wicked men ;” thus he continued in what he considered my praises, until at last the commissaries and inspectors of police arose and bowed. During this speech I watched his features, to see if I could descry the impression I made, and what were his thoughts under that lively countenance.

This scene had scarcely been brought to an end before another individual entered. This person bore the name of Coviello. He was a good lawyer ; had been a member of the Parliament, and was related to one of the best, most honest and respected members of the bar.

“ Come, Coviello, sit down near me,” said Calagno with his usual familiarity and joviality, which far from being the offsprings of good nature and a serene conscience, were on the contrary stimulated by an inward conviction that whoever he addressed was the fool and he was not.

Dr. Coviello remained standing at the door, looking at me with amazement.

“ Come here,” insisted Calagno, “ we are all friends here.”

The new comer obeyed and took a seat on the other side of the master of the house, who asked :

“ What have you done ? Did you succeed in your mission ?”

But the lawyer kept silent, darting alternate glances at him and me, which meant—“ Can I speak before this man ?” Cal-



agno understood the cause of his hesitation, and with a sarcastic laugh, said to him, "Do you think that if Balzani were not a trusty man, I would make you unfold your business? Speak, man, be not a booby!"

Coviello gave me a look of distrust and in an abashed manner related the success of his mission—a mission of abomination and tyranny.

If Dr. Coviello with some remains of a feeling of shame, felt overcome at my witnessing his presence and business there, my position was not the less embarrassing, for the same reason, and I felt it deeply. Still, on mature reflection, I deemed it one of the moral triumphs of my life; for notwithstanding my presence in that den of infamy, and Calagno's asseveration of my being one of his party, lawyer Coviello did not change his abashed and criminal look, but gave his report reluctantly and in the manner of a culprit who is obliged to confess his crime. This showed me plainly that public opinion was so strong in the belief of my liberal sentiments, that no contrary evidence was able to change it.

It was near dusk when I left and hurried to signor Niccolo's, where I had an engagement with some members of the Comitato.

Father Cialdoni had reported to me a place in the country where there were a good number of fire arms buried. As the removal of them would be a very hazardous performance, requiring the strictest secrecy, I deemed it prudent that we should personally execute it.

As there was an edict that any one who might be found walking on the roads out of the city after dusk should be arrested, we chose to go early so that we might reach the country mansion before night. I borrowed a cabriolet from my brother-in-law, for our conveyance; which gave us the appearance of a pleasure party. Father Cialdoni, the Doctor, Francesco P. Garzilli, my brother Vincent and myself, all armed,



started in that small vehicle. On reaching a bridge called *Ponte dell Ammiraglio*, one of the wheels slipped in a hollow of the badly kept road; the overloaded conveyance, losing its equilibrium, was overturned and we were thrown into the mud. This mishap was alarming, especially as near that very spot was a barrack of revenue officers.

We succeeded after great efforts in setting up the cabriolet, but it was already dark, and to proceed in the same way would with certainty have attracted suspicion. I told my brother-in-law to drive home. The rest of us pursued our journey on foot.

The distance we had to walk was short, but full of danger, for had any of the numerous mounted patrol met us, they would have arrested us, and finding us armed, would have shot us. Instead of taking the turnpike we slipped beneath an arch of the bridge on the left, and by a difficult path reached the opposite bank of the river. We walked silently, two by two. I was the foremost, having Mr. P. for companion. We had now to cross the road, climb another bank, invade the garden of a miller and make our way to the mansion. The sky was overcast and the darkness intense. I strained my eyes, and it seemed to me that I saw several shadows in the road moving one after another. "Look there, P," I whispered to my companion. "It looks like a mounted patrol."

"No," he answered, "they are the carts of the miller left alongside the road."

How my heart palpitated, when on reaching the middle of the road I found myself but two yards distance from a couple of mounted gendarme. My courage was nearly failing me, as those shadowy forms loomed upon us. The best plan, in this moment of deadly peril, was certainly, to face the danger. So we continued to walk silently and slowly, passing by the side of four more couples of soldiers. When I had passed them all, my heart was tortured by the greatest suspense for my



friends, but they also went by unperceived. We had an appallingly narrow escape ! If we had flinched or made the least sign of surprise, our lives would have been certainly sacrificed.

The whole night was passed in digging out several boxes of guns, muskets, carabines, pistols, bags of balls, and demijohns of gunpowder ; and in cleaning the arms which the rust had not ruined. Late in the night the weather cleared up, the moon shone brilliantly, and the wind began to howl. I went to the top of the house to make discoveries. I could discern the dreaded patrols on the roads, like dark spots moving slowly and noiselessly ; whilst several persons, in the surrounding gardens, some climbing a fence, some thrusting themselves into a hedge row, and some creeping stealthily in the vineyards, were coming to the appointed meeting. What a contrast ! Brute force and tyranny on the road and palpitating but undaunted patriots on the other side of the fence. They came to procure a coveted weapon, esteemed, in those times, as dear as life itself.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE PLAN.

THE result of five months of unremitting labor, was such as to astonish myself. The smallest town or hamlet had its committee at work. The whole of Sicily was in a blaze; and Maniscalco became more fierce in his cruelties.

Among other barbarities was the revival of the confraternity of the *Anime dei corpi decollati*, or of the souls of the executed. The members of this institution went round the city, on the morning of an execution, with a box in their hands, begging for money, to be invested in masses for the soul of the one executed. It is impossible to describe how appalling and heart-rending were the voices of these harpies, who ran, every morning, through the city, crying:—*Sia raccomandata l'anima di questo poveretto*—have pity on the soul of this poor wretch. This was intended to strike terror into the minds of the populace, but it served rather to exasperate them the more, making heroes of the boys, and heroines of the women.

The faithful monks conveyed our correspondence throughout the island. Every morning there reached me from all quarters expostulations and entreaties to hasten the crisis. But I felt the immense responsibility which rested upon me, and knew the terrible consequences a failure would bring. There were moments that I almost repented having accepted the leadership.

Father Carmelo was arrested, not because anything was known against him, but in carrying out the policy of making



prisoners every night. This threw consternation into the central Comitato, and I felt it the more heavily by reason of our friendship. Another brave monk took his place, but he could not well supply the loss of the high-minded friend.

On the evening of the sixth of December, I found Signor Nicolo, with a haggard and terror-stricken countenance. He related to me that the government not having been able to find the thread of the conspiracy, and being sure that there was one on foot, had determined, by the advice of Maniscalco and Calagno, to raise a false alarm.

It was customary, in Palermo, to have, on the evening of the 7th of December, a grand procession of the Immaculate Conception. The silver statue of the Madonna came out from the church of St. Francis, and traversed the thoroughfare Toledo, as far as the Cathedral. Many statues of saints accompanied her, with priests, friars, congregations, and bands of music. The people ran in mass to accompany the procession, at the end of which they passed the whole night in the street, partly repeating the journey of the Madonna, from one church to the other, chanting prayers and rosaries, and partly loitering, eating *pietrafendola* or citron cake, and drinking *zambù* or white brandy.

The government had ordered all the police and *gendarme* to disguise themselves and mix with the people, and in the moment of the religious fervor, to hoist tricolor flags, fire pistols and guns at all points, and hail liberty. By this unexpected pretended rising, they were sure to attract and catch the most liberal people, and the leaders of the conspiracy.

This news took me by surprise. Consternation overwhelmed me at the thought of the feasibility and probable success of their plan, and I was at a loss what to do, for it lacked only a few hours to its execution.

But this suspense did not last long. The arrival of Mondini,



Caldara, the doctor, Father Cialdori, Garzilli, and my brother Vincent, caused me to come to a determination.

"Brothers," said I to them, solemnly, "this is a night of work. Go immediately to find all the members of our Comitato, and those of your sub-comitatos, and between now and to-morrow morning, let the news be spread throughout, in the strictest secrecy, that by the order of the supreme Comitato, the people to-morrow evening must keep in doors."

All looked at me with amazement, and Garzilli asked: "What is the matter?"

"My brothers," I answered, "moments are precious; go to your mission, at present there is no time for explanations."

I never revealed, even to my companions, anything secret when there was no necessity for it.

The result surpassed my expectations. The procession took place the next evening, but it had rather the appearance of a funeral than of a festal solemnity. Not a single individual was seen in the streets, and even the usually long files of priests and monks were thinned by the absence of two-thirds of them. So that the policemen finding neither crowd nor persons to excite, did not execute their orders.

The lieutenant general, prince of Satriano, was furious; Maniscalco and Calagno were fuming and fretting at their failure. It was for us a day of great triumph, but one which warned us to be more cautious!

In the afternoon I went to see my friend Calagno. He received me with his usual cordiality, but his small grey eyes seemed intent to penetrate the innermost depths of my secret heart. I felt that I was under a searching scrutiny, and recruiting all my presence of mind I endeavored to put on an unconcerned countenance, in order to withstand that gaze unwaveringly. Above all, I kept my mouth closed except when I had to answer questions; knowing that of all the lineaments the mouth is the true tell-tale of inward emotions. The result was reassuring



to me, for after a while he began his usual sarcastic and humorous conversation.

After the day of the procession the insults and cruelties of the police had become insufferable, the population was in an alarming condition, and messages reached me every day from other cities, declaring that they could not withhold the people any longer from an outbreak.

One evening signor Niccolo told me that there was Mr. B—i who was the chief of twenty sub-Comitatos, who would by all means have a conference with and some explanations from the president of the central Comitato. I knew this man very well. He was an usher of the civil tribunal, a very popular man, and an earnest patriot. Although it was against our rules, I said that I would see him.

On his seeing me he expressed his pleasure by exclaiming joyously :

“ I thought that the president could be no other man than you, sir, and I rejoice at it.”

“ I thank you,” I answered, “ but what urged you to seek my presence ?”

“ Two powerful reasons, sir. The first is that we want to know if this revolution will be in a republican sense, for on this point we do not agree, sir. My followers are for the most part men who can read and write, and they say that we cannot sustain a republic. I am sure that your answer can not be but sincere. The second motive is in the name of the people to ask for immediate action, because we are driven to despair by the tortures and imprisonment which thin the population every day.”

Whilst he was thus speaking his limbs were resolutely advanced, his hands gesticulated vigorously, his physiognomy brightened, and his black eyes scintillated.

“ In answer to the first question,” I replied, calmly, “ the Comitato has not set any plan, because it does not belong to



you and me to settle the lot of a people, but to the people themselves, legally assembled. At present our endeavors shall be to annihilate tyranny. All the oppressed parts of Italy will follow us, I am sure, as in 1848, and then think about the form of government."

"But," he interrupted, "we elected the duke of Genova as our constitutional king. Why can we not call him home?"

"The duke of Genova," I answered. "refused the offer, and he cannot be called without degrading the character of our people. But the true question is not this. By common consent all Italy must be united in a single nation with one government to reacquire thus the grandeur of old, and not to be in fear of any other nation."

He looked a little puzzled and said:

"Then, if it is so, we take the king of Piedmont."

"Yes," I said, "but I do not think he will have it."

"Why, sir?"

"That king is treating our brothers in exile very well; but when the strife commences, it is not only to drive out the king of Naples, the pope, and the petty dukes; there is Austria which is a very hard bone. If the king of Piedmont were a patriot he would join the Italians and fight the Emperor. But by so doing he would put in jeopardy his own kingdom; and hitherto I know not of any king so true a patriot, as to endanger his own."

"But suppose he does it?"

"In that case, I, as an individual, would, with all my heart, call him king of Italy. But this is useless talk, it will be in the hands of the Italian people to decide on these matters. As for the second question you shall receive orders very soon through the regular channel."

While the population was in this state of excitement we did not fail, though at great risk, to traverse the surrounding country, in order to ascertain the real number of armed men.



Finally I called the whole *Comitato*; exposed the state of affairs; gave notice of the letters received from Calabria, Naples and Romagna in which those patriots spoke of the earnestness of their people to follow our examples, and showed them that we had three thousand affiliated men in town and two thousand in the surrounding country, all well armed, having two four pounders already mounted. This enumeration did not include the mountaineers, who were already waiting for a signal.

It was unanimously resolved that the revolution should break out on the 27th of the month (January, 1850.) The time was appointed to be at two hours after dusk, for the reason that the people would be more willing to commence in the shade of night and the soldiers at such a time are more unwilling to fight, not knowing where the enemy may be hidden. It was resolved also that the notice to the *sub-comitatos* should be given only on the morning of the 27th in order to avoid giving any clue to the police; and that my usual messengers should depart soon to give notice to the mountaineer patriots.

The plan of attack was discussed and agreed on as follows:

Firstly: the police had several times tried to give false alarms, which would cause the people to doubt, when it was actually given. It was, therefore for the very alarm, resolved that an order should be spread that on the evening of the 27th every citizen should be ready for the call, which should come from the *Comitato* in the form of several large rockets in the air, terminating with the Italian colors. It was resolved that the *Comitato* should join at some place, go out armed in a body and fire the signals. Then we had to proceed to the *Fieravecchia*, a place destined for the general gathering. Thence Mondino had to go to the ward of Maggione, placed himself at the head of one hundred men, who were there awaiting; march through the Kolso, picking up the men who were ready; and the monks of Gangia, and so re-enforced, go and surprise the garrison of the *palazzo di Finanze*. A score of men were to



be hidden in the convent of S. Francesco. These, at a given signal, had to disarm eight artillery-men who guarded two four pounders kept by the government, inside that convent, with all the annunitions, ready to be used at a moment's notice.

Father Cialdoni had to run, with some men, through the streets of Lamprionelli, Calderaj, and Sant' Annas, collect the men, go to take the two cannons of S. Francesco and attack the Finanze from the street Bottay.

Francesco P. had to march through the Cintorinaj to the market places Carraffello, Bocceria, and Piazza nuova, calling all the armed Picciotti to him. At the latter place there was a house where four hundred market boys had shelter in the winter nights by paying each one *grano*. Mr. P. had to set loose these young folks ; to go round and make the most possible noise in the streets ; ring the bells of the churches, and the most of them to help in making the barricades, the oversight of which duty had been entrusted to a member of the *Comitato* who was an architect, and acquainted with the places of several depots of building stones in the city.

Another member of the *Comitato* had to gather the men of the populous ward Albergaria, and place them in houses, from which they could keep a brisk fire against the soldiers who from some streets communicating with the Palazzo Reale, would probably pour into that quarter. Another member had to collect those of the ward Capo, to do the same at the northern part of the Palazzo. My brother Vincenzo was to remain at the place Fieravecchia, and guard the gate Porta di Termini, where it was settled that the people from the country should enter.

All those who lived near Porta Macqueda had to barricade and keep watch at that gate.

One hundred men, from *Borgo* and *Colli*, commanded by a chief called Zicchelli, had to set free the prisoners ; and if they



could not succeed in that, acting as sharp-shooters, they were to keep the troops of Molo engaged throughout the night.

I reserved for myself the attack of the military quarters at Noviziato. Three hundred countrymen from Mezzo Morreale, with a small piece of artillery, were to enter the gate Porta d' Ossone, where I was in a house near at hand, and thence go to attack the Noviziato. In the environs, the countrymen of Olivuzza had to enter quietly, from the back garden, a mansion, where all the officers of a battalion of infantry dwelt, at a distance from the soldiers' quarters; then they were to surprise the soldiers, who, being deprived of their officers, could not make a long resistance.

Those of Bocca di Falco had to surprise a small garrison armed with four cannons; those of Morreale were to assist in the work, and both united come down and attack the cavalry quarters and other troops stationed at Mezzo Morreale in defence of the back part of the Palazzo. They were to be helped by one hundred friars collected in a place on the spot. The countrymen of Bagheria, Abate, Ficarazzi and other small villages, had to come in through Porta di Termini.

Each party had to run to the assistance of others, if necessary, and all had to advance towards the Palazzo as to a centre. This plan was agreed on at the house of Signor Nicolo, where, for measure of prudence, I had taken up my quarters, ten days before the contemplated outbreak.

On the following day I was surprised to see before me my dear friend Baron Bentivegna. On seeing me, he exclaimed:

"What shall we do?"

"All is settled."

"When?"

"On the 27th *a due ore*—two hours after dusk."

He jumped like a school-boy; and whilst I was detailing my plan, his face was mantled with a crimson hue, his mouth open and his eyes protruding. When I finished, he said:



"I shall be at the hour, on the 27th, on the top of the mountain of Grazia, with five hundred brave fellows."

I rejoiced in hearing of this timely and substantial help, because I had not expected any of the mountaineers on that night, and I replied :

"When you see the signals, come down forthwith, and attack the troops on the right flank from the gardens of the Porrazzi road, but always approaching the city."

This arrangement made, he joyfully returned to his town.

To make a revolution, it is not sufficient that a brave people is willing and ready to fight. There might be thousands who would march unflinchingly against a cannon, and not one to be found amongst them who would show himself the first at the beginning of a revolution ; although each would follow, after it is commenced. It requires another sort of courage to present oneself the first and call the people to arms. Those who have not been in such a case cannot estimate it properly.

This knowledge made the *Comitato* resolve to be the first to go out and call the people to arms. The gathering together in arms was the greatest danger. It was arranged that each member should go in the afternoon to the place of reunion with his gun taken to pieces, for the sake of diminishing the bulk concealed under his cloak.

The second difficulty was to find the place where to join. No one would give his house or a place belonging to him, because it was certain that, in case of failure, all might be saved but the one from whose house the revolution broke out. Finally, one of our party offered a tumble-down uninhabited mansion, with the agreement, that we must break the lock of the front door so as to give it the appearance of having been broken open.

On the evening before that of the outbreak, we joined at Sig. Nicolo's, where I heard the distressing report that the gentleman had changed his mind in regard to giving us the



old mansion. This news filled us with the greatest anxiety and consternation. The order had already been passed in the surrounding country, all was ready !

None of the members of the *Comitato* offered his house, for the reason that there were women and children. After having discussed many plans, and rejected them as inconsistent, I rose up with the following words :

“ My brothers, at the very moment that I accepted this mission, I mentally gave up my life for my country. Now that all is ready, and fear of almost certain death makes each shrink from lending his house, I give you mine. Thus if, contrary to our hopes, any mishap occurs, you may be saved, but I am irretrievably lost. May the God of justice defend our cause !”

Thus all was ready. The rockets had been made a fortnight before, one of them having been tried went up wonderfully well, and Caldara took them for safe keeping.

Now all the success of the enterprise consisted in taking the royalists by surprise. On the morning of the 27th, one could perceive in the look of every one, the mark of serious cares, and in his movements a haste as if on interesting business.

I reflected, that if the police had the least clue, or even a surmise, they might cross our plan and destroy us entirely with the loss of the best citizens.

In this dreadful state of uncertainty, I resolved to pay a visit to my friend, Mr. Calagno, to relieve my doubts in this way : If he knows or suspects anything, he will arrest me, and in this case the affair is adjourned and all others are safe ; if not, we may attack with security.

In fact I went to his house towards two in the afternoon, and I found him sitting in his usual position. I sat down near him, with an assumed oppressed look, and without saying a word. The following dialogue ensued :

“ What is the matter with you to-day, Balzani ?”



"Nothing, I only feel in a bad humor."

"If any one has offended you, speak out, man, and in five minutes he shall be pinioned by the . . . and carried to the prisons of Morreale."

"Nothing of the kind."

"What then?"

"I wish that you would obtain a passport for me."

"What for?" planting his searching eyes upon me.

"Because I think this a country that a good man cannot live in."

"But why would you leave relatives, friends, and a good position?"

"Will you know the very reason?" with an earnest expression. "Because if I were you and you me, according to my past political position, and the present humor of some of the people, I should feel in duty bound to arrest you."

He looked at me with the same smirking, sarcastic, ironical leer in his eyes. When I concluded he drew from the folds of his cloak his skeleton hand, taking mine, and then in a haughty and confident tone said:

"Mr. Balzani, we laugh at the rumors of those low masses. As for you, sir, stay where you are, because at the head of the police there are men who know who are the bad and who are the gentlemen. Good bye, sir, and live tranquilly."

I went forth from that house bounding with joy. He knew nothing!



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### OUTBREAK.

OH! the terrible night!—the most dreadful night of my life! Whilst the *Comitato*, composed of thirty individuals, had gone towards dusk to join at my house, I went to my place of concealment, whence, on seeing the agreed rockets, I had to start, meet the three hundred countrymen and perform my part. I dressed myself for that occasion in full black, with the most possible neatness, knowing how our people respect and prefer to be led by a *Galantuomo*—a gentleman.

The night set in, dark and tempestuous; and a chilly eastern wind spread a disagreeable mist. The streets were deserted, as if at midnight. The market places, which at that hour were used to be crowded with people, had a desolate aspect. The venders, who were wont to sing at the highest pitch of their voices, “Hot bread—fried fish—anchovies—fruits—olives—boiled greens,” etc., stood behind their booths and stores without uttering a single cry; but with rather lively and humorous countenances. The police patrols were alarmed at this unusual spectacle, but its source was a riddle that they could not solve. I stood before a large window on the third floor, with my arms crossed on my chest, looking at the expanse of the blackened sky, with the eagerness of expectation that made minutes seem like hours, while I would have contracted hours into minutes.

The bells of the clock of a neighboring church struck the hours and quarters. Oh, what an immeasurable distance existed



between one quarter and another ! Finally the much-longed hour of two was struck. My heart beat violently, my bosom heaved, a cold perspiration bathed my temples, and my eyes remained fixed with the most intense anxiety on the dark sky. I was neither fearful nor hopeful at that moment, for I had no thoughts—all my physical and moral powers were concentrated in one object, the appearance of an ascending rocket.

Another quarter passed me in the state of the greatest anxiety, when I was startled by a noise, which seemed to me the report of several guns, and a strange dread crept over me. I became frantic—still I reasoned within myself : that cannot be them ; that must have been some other noise ; it is impossible that they transgressed the important order of firing the rockets at the first outset, even if they were instantly attacked ; they know very well, that without this signal no one will stir ; and all the countrymen who expect it ! and my dear friend Bentivegna, who is waiting at the top of the mountain ! It is impossible !—

At this moment other reports reached my ear, but feebler and confused with the howling of the wind. I joined my hands together under the pressure of extreme agony, and waited, but nothing could I any longer hear except the sound of the moaning wind. I exhausted myself in mental speculations, but they ended only in placing me in a whirl of incertitude, of doubt, of despair. Finally, finding this state of mind impossible to be borne any longer, heedless of danger I resolved to go out and see for myself the state of affairs.

Scarcely had I passed the second street and reached via Macqueda, before I heard the trampling of a patrol. Turning my head I saw the glitter of numerous bayonets, and I hastened forward to distance them as much as I could. That large patrol of soldiers being an unusual thing, I began to comprehend that my companions had failed, and appalling presentiments pervaded my heart. To better sustain an unconcerned



demeanor, I put on a pair of yellow kids (with which my pockets were always provided), and continued my way. But with dismay I perceived another patrol coming towards me. A few steps more, and the officer hailed me to stop.

"You are arrested," said the captain to me.

In a moment I perceived that if there was a chance of passing over the danger with which I was now threatened, it was to be found in courage, a firm bearing, a bold face, and an aspect of outraged respectability. Accordingly I stopped, and assuming an authoritative mien I addressed myself to the officer, remonstrating that I was a public functionary going to the opera, and that this outrage should, on the following day, be punished by the king's authorities.

The officer looked at me from head to foot; then shrugging his shoulders said:

"Dear sir, I am very sorry to be the instrument of inconveniencing you. But it is an order from high quarters, to arrest whoever we find in the streets. I perceive that you should make an exception, but I have nothing to do with it. The only service I can do you is, that instead of securing you in a dungeon, I shall let you inside of Castell' a Mare, to walk at liberty."

So saying he begged of me to accompany him. It was fortunate for me that this encounter was with an extraordinary military patrol, and not with *sbirri*, for, these would have searched me, the first thing, and found in my pockets two revolvers, which would have caused me to be placed in a cell and shot, independently of the conspiracy.

When we reached the castle the captain who led me consigned me to the officer on duty, saying that I was to be kept as a prisoner, but free to walk at my leisure.

As I stepped into the second inner part of the castle and saw the last bridge drawn behind me, I felt my heart beating fast and my nerves quivering, because I was almost sure that I should never get out of that place but to be executed.



The captain on duty treated me very civilly. He took me into the guard room, and pointing to his camp couch, said that I could sleep there for the night, if I chose, and I could walk up and down the ramparts and bastions at my leisure.

After a little while he called the sergeant and ordered the change of sentinels. I took this opportunity of expressing to him a wish to go into the open air, for I felt oppressed.

Courteously he answered that I could make myself at home, and out I went. I began first to pace the large square, where piles of cannons, and balls situated in pyramids, formed a kind of martial ornament. The thought of finding some means of escape entirely absorbed my mind, but the more I pondered upon it, the more evidently arose before me its impossibility, for I was particularly acquainted with the place, and saw clearly that flight was out of the question.

As chance would have it, I began, unintentionally, to ascend a rampart, which brought me to the bastions which form a circular line looking towards the sea.

At every fort that I crossed I answered the call of the sentinel with the words, "the guest of your captain."

As they were newly mounted sentinels, they had been witness of the kindness of that officer, and the permission given to me to walk at leisure.

Continuing my tour, I shuddered in seeing, on my left, the windows of the chapel where the prisoners condemned to death pass their three last days. I hastened to leave behind that place which caused an incubus in my heart; but on emerging into another fort, I found the sentinel there stationed to be a man of a talkative propensity. After the usual challenge, he began to speak to me about the weather, the life of a soldier, etc., and he would have gone on to speak of the history of all his genealogy if an incident had not occurred. A tall, masculine woman, carrying in her hand a basket, containing cigars, cakes, biscuits, and a bottle, and having a small lantern stuck in it, called out—*Biscotti, Sicari, Zambù*



As if inspired by an internal instinct, but without any motive or aim, I addressed myself, in a jocular tone, to the woman, and asked her to bring us good cakes and a bottle of wine.

"If you wait ten minutes," she answered, bluntly.

I thrust my hand into my pocket, and, governed by the same promptings, drew out five dollars, which I placed in her hand, giving it, at the same time, a powerful pressure.

The woman went, and I began to muse :—what a fool I am ! What good can that woman do me ?

At this moment the soldier on the highest tower struck the hour,  $3\frac{1}{4}$ , or quarter past eight ; the sentinels, one after the other answered—*Allerta sto*—All is well ; my companion did the same in his turn, and the cry, fainter and fainter, went round until it was lost.

This incident recalled me to the terrible position in which I was, and the appalling truth flashed on my mind, that action and not musing could perchance save my life. I therefore resumed humoring the soldier. But before long the woman reappeared, placed a bottle and two tin cups on the ground, darted at me a steady glance, and retired.

My mind fell into a vortex of conjectures.—What can all this portend ?—she took five dollars (a sum that perhaps she has never seen together) without noticing it !—she certainly understood by my pressing her hand, that I was in some bad predicament—and that glance of hers !—

All these surmises were the affair of a moment. Jollily addressing the soldier, I said :

"Let us drink the king's health !"

"You know, sir, that I cannot drink whilst on duty," answered he.

"Come, I am the captain's guest ! drink !"

This seemed to him a good reason to overlook a small offence of discipline, and he took the tempting cup. I took the other and filled both to the brim.



"The king's health," I said, in the same whispering tone that all our conversation had been carried.

As I approached the cup to my lips, a thought flashed into my mind, in pursuance of which I poured the liquor slowly into my bosom.

"Excellent!" smacked the soldier.

"Another cup *Camerata*—my chum, and all is up."

The performance was repeated, and the empty bottle tossed over into the sea. One minute had not yet elapsed when the soldier began to stammer, and in another he had sunk asleep on the ground! Was the wine drugged, or was it so powerful as to intoxicate the soldier? I cannot tell, because I have never been able to solve this problem!

And now what to do?—I had no other alternative than to throw myself into the sea, to run the risk of a probable death, in order to escape from a certain one. The fort was some thirty feet high from the sea, where lay some massive stones placed there to prevent the breakers from injuring the walls.

To hesitate was to be lost. I picked up the two tin cups and tossed them into the sea. The same thing I did with my pistols. Then I jumped upon one of the cannon apertures and looked around. The night was pitchy dark. Heaven and sea joined together in a mass of black, and the wind harmonized with the sound of the troubled bosom of the waters. At this moment the sentinel from the main tower struck the quarter. The sounds of that bell whizzed in my brain and my blood curdled! The sentinel who had to answer the—all is well—lay senseless at my feet, and discovery was imminent.—Swiftly came the cry, and when it was next to me I made an effort and cried—all is well—and so it continued and faded away. The alarm passed, I secured to my neck the strings of my large circular cloak, which hung from my shoulders, and gathered the two ends with both my hands. I then raised my mind to heaven and in fervent and soul-felt prayer I uttered "*In*



*manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum!* Oh, God my Lord, to thy hands I commend my soul!"

Then I plunged unhesitatingly, into the dark abyss, reckless of life; little hoping to survive the awful leap. But it was not destined by the Supreme Mover that I had to die such a death! Providence had doomed me to the slow but keen sufferings of the life of an exile! My ample cloak took the wind, and acting as a parachute prevented the rapidity of my fall and caused me to touch the rocks unharmed.

My astonishment was such that I could hardly realize the fortunate event. Believing it a sign that Providence kept me to achieve some deed for my country, my courage redoubled, and I plunged into the water, to cross the small basin as near the land as I could, for I knew not how to swim.

Forward, but with difficulty, I proceeded among heaving waves, flashing phosphorically, heedless of the spray which dashed into my face. The water in some places reached my chin, and every wave passed over my head ere it fell with a roaring noise upon the beach.

Finally I reached the shore. The boats were all drawn up and formed a crest around it. As I placed my foot on the dry land, I turned my head, as from instinct, to give an appalled glance at the sea, the rocks that I had escaped, and the tower from which I had leaped. But all was involved in thick darkness.

I sat behind one of the boats, weakened as I was with fatigue and chilly from the water with which my clothing was saturated. The first thing I did was to untie my cloak and squeeze the water out of it. The same operation I performed on my apparel by pressing my hands on my body, keeping, in the meanwhile, my ears bent, seeking to detect any noise which could portend discovery of my flight. All was silent, except the elements. What next? . . . Though appalled by the awful reality of my situation, I felt the extreme necessity of



instant action, but my limbs refused it, and I was forced, for the moment, to remain leaning on the fishing boat.

Being out of sight of the advanced posts and sentinels, I began to ponder on what I should do. I was on the outside of the walled city. To go on the mountains was out of the question, for, all the roads and turnpikes I had to pass, were full of patrols, and a man in my garb, in such places, at such a time, and on such a night, was too suspicious not to be arrested. Therefore there was but one course—to enter the city and find refuge in some friendly house. I had two gates near at hand, to choose for my entrance: *Porta Felice* and *Porta Carbone*. The former was more frequented, and in an ordinary night I would have chosen this, in order to give less suspicion. The latter was more solitary, therefore the more apt to create suspicion. But having learned from the officer, that there was an order to arrest every one found in the streets, I selected this one for my entrance. This musing was of a very short duration. Every minute I expected to hear the alarm from the castle. It was a solemn moment. Inaction, or even hesitation would have proved fatal. To shake off the incubus under which I was laboring, I made an effort, shook my limbs, and with determination addressed myself to *Porta Carbone*. This was, on that evening, abandoned by the revenue guards.

On entering it I found the streets solitary. I began to revolve in my mind which way to go, there was danger everywhere, and perhaps what I thought to be the best way might prove the worst. Finally I made my resolution, and resumed my walk to the street of Cassari. Presently I turned to the left, to the street of Chiavettieri, and then to the right, on a narrow lane called Calzagai, brushing, as I walked, the walls, and profiting by all the shadows that carts, benches, and other encumbrances made against the dim lights of the rare lamps.

Whilst I was so anxiously wending my way, looking eagerly if any moving object met my eyes, I removed, now and anon,



my steadfast gaze from my onward path, to glance uneasily at every shadowy object, or to look with straining eyes, back on the way I had passed over.

Whilst I was so walking in this narrow street, I perceived at some distance, the glitter of bayonets coming towards me. My head whirled with confusion. Fortunately there was on my right, the door of a house open. I slipped into the entrance and placed myself behind the door.

Slowly but sensibly the sound of the treading of the military advanced, increasing the pulsation of my heart. When they were before the door, a voice paralyzed me.

“Halt ! There is a door open ! Sergeant Figlia, go and see !”

Immediately was heard the clattering of the butt ends of muskets on the pavement, which echoed in my heart like the roll of drums at an execution. The sergeant stepped in, musket in hand. He stopped at three paces inside and looked up. A wooden, rickety stair-case presented itself in front, ending with a door at the end of some twenty steps. Fortunately the city lamp happened to be before the door, and allowed the sergeant from the position in which he stood to examine the stair-case clearly.

After a couple of minutes, which were for me equal to two centuries, he turned his head to the officer, and said, “clear.”

“Well,” was answered from without, “shut the door, mark the number, and report to-morrow the door opened against the rules, for the punishment of the offender.”

The sergeant passed his musket to his left hand, and with his right, pulled the door, stepping backwards until it closed. In clutching the door he touched my elbow. This gave me a start, and caused all my blood to rush for a moment into my heart. But fortunately he did not notice it.

The troop was put in march again, and as the sound of their footsteps fell fainter and fainter on my ear, so my heart felt



by degrees easier, and my mind acquired a comparatively cool power of reflection.

I did not lose time, the place was clear for the moment, and I profited by it. But I was doomed in avoiding Charybdis to fall in with Scylla.

On I went, doubling my caution, when, after awhile my attention was arrested by another patrol, at three hundred paces distance; but this time they went the same direction I was going. Thus I had enemies in two opposite directions of my way. Surely, under such circumstances I had no choice, and I was obliged to continue my way.

I did my best to keep up my courage, though my position was terribly alarming. Like an Indian scout, I measured my steps, not to gain on them. Finally I came to a point, where the street branched off into several others. I had to deviate, to get near the house of signor Niccolo, where I had made up my mind to seek refuge. But what to do with other patrols I should certainly have to meet with?

I turned to a street where there was a small market place. All the stores were closed, except a baker and a green grocer. A ruse occurred to my mind, and I was not slow to avail myself of it.

First I rubbed my hands in the mud, and after discomposing my hair, I passed them over my face. Then I went into the baker shop and bought a double loaf of common bread, which usually weighs about five pounds, and from the grocer I took a large bunch of salad.

The baker did not notice my disguise, but the grocer looked at me stupified, and when I turned my back to him, with a sympathetic voice, said:

“May God speed and defend you!”

Having assured myself that no one was in that square, I gathered my besmeared cloak around me, placed the bread under one arm and the salad under the other, and keeping



within the shade of the walls I glided into a narrow street, bending my body so as to seem a poor old artizan who was carrying food to his family. With this plan in my head I felt venturesome, and my fear was relieved, till I reached the house of my friend without encountering any other patrol.

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## CHAPTER XL.

### CONCLUSION.

As human life is a series of strange changes, and singular vicissitudes, so human nature has its unceasing revolutions. The excitement of danger had kept up my spirit, and made me feel bold and strong in my dreadful walk ; but when I arrived at signor Niccolo's, (a place of comparative safety) as danger subsided, I felt at once overcome with nervous palpitation and exhaustion.

The family was in great alarm, and with the excitement of fear asked me the news. Without telling my adventure, I said that I knew nothing particular, but for the enterprise it had certainly failed.

What a long night of agony I passed, occasioned by dread surmises ! Not a single thought for myself, but all for my dear companions !

As the day began to dawn, Father Cialdoni came, disguised with a heavy, false beard. His countenance was alarmed, his lips had no utterance.

I looked at him with intense consternation and trepidation, dreading to ask the news ; he gazed at me stupified.

After a few minutes of painful silence I forced out :

“ How was it ? ”

With a nervous tremor in his person, and a faltering in the tones of his voice, he began to speak :



“We were issuing forth from your house, when we perceived a patrol of Swiss soldiers and *sbirri*—about twenty. As we had previously planned, half of our number discharged their guns at them and they instantly fled. Forward we went, and on reaching the larger part of the street Bosco, we began to fire the signals. But alas! none of them ascended the air above the buildings.”

“How was that!” exclaimed I, in great excitement, “I tried one of them, and it went up beautifully!”

“It was the foresight,” he replied, “of our companion Cal-dara. For fear of being detected, he hid the rockets in a cellar, without thinking that the damp would have weakened the gunpowder, and made them useless.”

“Now, I understand,” I exclaimed, with a spasm in my heart, “the cause of the failure!”

“What could we do?” he continued, “your house was already, by the first encounter, marked out, blood had been spilt, therefore there was no other alternative but forward. At the corner of *Forno di Mirciari* we found our brothers the architects, ready for the construction of the barricades.

With shouts of liberty, calling the people out in the name of the country, and of the *Comitato*, we reached the cross way of Spedaletto.

“In this brief space of way a score of men armed with guns and pistols joined in answer to our call. This made us hopeful, thinking that we could supply the want of the signals by going round and calling the people to arms.

“At this point a patrol appeared against us from the street S. Cecilia, and another from Spedaletto. We divided ourselves into two squads, and our well aimed fire caused them both to retreat.

“Here we detached Mondino with half a dozen men, to go by the street Montesanto, to the ward Maggiore, call the good number of armed men who were there, waiting for the signal,



and by way of the street Castrophilippo come to Fieravecchia and attack the soldiers on their rear.

“ On reaching the square Fieravecchia, we found all the corners of the streets beset with troops and *sbirri*, except that from which we entered and two of the narrow lanes of *Maestri d'Acqua* and *Teatro*. The continual reports of firearms had attracted all the patrols to that point.

“ Here our men gave the most conspicuous proofs of bravery. It would be long to narrate the details. We were surrounded by triple numbers posted at the corners, and the firing was very brisk. Some of us were placed behind the fountain of Palermo, some behind booths, and behind doors. We being armed only with fowling pieces could not attempt a hand to hand attack, but that our guns told, was evident by the cries and laments, that now and anon were heard from among the royalists.

“ A few came out sometimes to seize upon us, but our brave *picciotti* knocked them down with the butt ends of their guns.

“ With the greatest anxiety we awaited the diversion made by Mondino, but alas ! nothing was heard of him.

“ The fighting had lasted half an hour and we could perceive the large increase of the force of our enemy, by the rapidity of their firing.

“ Considering that we could not expect any help, on account of the failure of the signals, and that when the three corners which were still clear, should be occupied by soldiers, we should be in a trap, we determined to retire, throwing away our arms and scattering ourselves as men who were indifferently attending to their own business.

“ Fortunately none of us were hurt, but I am anxious to know the fate of our companions.”

My brother Vincenzo, the doctor, and Francesco P., came one after another, and all expressed their painful uneasiness in regard to the other members of the *Comitato*. During the whole time of father Cialdoni's narration I kept my hand placed



upon my heart as though to press into motionlessness its tumultuous upheaving. Then I started from my seat, and with eager tone of voice, I begged of Signor Niccolo to go to the general and to the chiefs of police, in order to ascertain how affairs stood. He remained absent for two hours, which seemed to us two ages. When he came in his face was wan.

"What is the news?" I asked eagerly.

"Six men arrested," answered he, faintly.

"Who?"

"Garsilli, Caldara, Mondino, Garofalo, Deluca, and Ajello. The first three were of our central *Comitato*, and the others, patriots who fought at the Fieravecchia.

When I heard this terrible news I covered my eyes with my hands, and my whole frame shook with a tremendous spasm—I felt annihilated.—My companions present raved in despair.

"Be not alarmed," continued Signor Niccolo; "listen to me, and you will see that the affair is not so dark as it seems. I went to General N., who received me exultingly with a hearty shake of the hand, and with the words—'*the rascals failed last night.*'

"I then asked him if our good soldiers suffered any injury, and he answered—*many wounded.*

"He afterward related to me, that his Excellency, at the report of the first attack, poured all the troops into the city, with an order to arrest all they found in the streets; that six men had been arrested, at different points, but their being far from the Fieravecchia, unarmed, and without any indication on them connected with fighting, it was the opinion of the government that the rebels had made good their escape, and the six arrested were pacific citizens, who were going to retire—as they declared. Then I went round to the police quarters, and was told the same news, with the addition that they will be let out of the castle this afternoon.."

The word *castle* caused my blood to freeze.



"For those brave companions," he continued, darting at me an earnest look of painful interest, "there is no danger ; but for you, only for you I feel a presentiment, for, when I was leaving the general, he asked me, with an air of unconcernedness, but in which I could read the deepest interest—do you know a gentleman by the name of Mr. Alfio Balzani ?" This question, though not unexpected, was very near betraying me ; but I had the strength to answer with a well feigned indifference—No, sir, shall I ask for him ? He answered quickly :

" ' Oh, no, no ! Do not mind what I said.' "

" You see, these words portend no good, placed side by side with the circumstance, that the first attack happened just when our men were issuing from your house. All our endeavors must then be concentrated in saving you and all will be safe. "

I was prepared for this news, and now that my fears for my companions were appeased, I began to feel more heavily the weight of the calamity which was gathering above my head.

About this time came the leader of the country troops at whose head I had to attack the troops at their quarters.

" How is it," he exclaimed. " We were five hundred well armed men, waiting for the signals, the whole night, and now I hear that you commenced the attack without giving the signal, and what is more, our dear Mr. Caldara is in prison. We fear that he will be shot. Give us the order, sir, and we will enter the city now, achieve what failed last night, and redeem our friends !" \*

" No," I answered, " what you request would be rash and imprudent. Since, through an unforeseen accident, we could not surprise them and make our united attack, we cannot do it now that the government is alarmed and the troops under arms. We must wait for another opportunity, and God knows when that will be. I am a lost man, but still I cannot burthen my conscience by giving an order, which, I know, can result in

\* Caldara was beloved by all the men of the surrounding country.



nothing but a massacre of hundreds of brave hearts. Your men are all ready, but the thousands are panic-stricken, and their arms, I am sure, are by this hour re-buried. As for Mr. Caldara, I have received news that there is no danger for his life."

"I go, sir," he answered, "to relate your words to my men, but in all circumstances, when warned three days beforehand, we shall always be ready."

That day passed in a state of great anxiety and perplexity. In the afternoon Signor Nicolo went out to learn the news. When he returned home it was dusk. Scarcely had he entered and seated himself, when, overcome by his feelings, he fainted.

This circumstance threw the family into a state of alarm, for fear that something had happened to him, but I surmised something more dreadful.

When he came to, and was able to speak, he turned a sad look on us who surrounded him, and in a slow, but sorrowful and impressive manner, said:

"Our brothers and our companions are no more! I have been betrayed! They said to me this morning that the six prisoners should be set free this afternoon; and so it was, but only to be dragged to the square Fieravecchia, and there shot! Oh treachery! Had we known this, we could have this morning called the country people, and, at all events, died with our companions!

"They have butchered them, not because they thought them guilty, for they found no clue of culpability about them, but only for the sake of making an example, and striking the people with terror. Oh, the martyrs and heroes!

"A mock court martial met this morning in the castle, and arraigned the prisoners, without allowing any defence—arraigned! no! they told them that they had to die in three



hours! Six *Czociferi*\* were introduced to them, and then the President declared to them that the only way of saving their lives was to unfold the conspiracy and tell the names of the chiefs. All kept a noble silence except the young Garsilli, who, with the animation of a Scxvola, said:—‘No, minion of an abhorred tyrant, the secret shall die with us! Our death is a halo of glory, and we feel happy to sacrifice our lives in the service of our beloved country! I spit at your face, and at that of the tyrant, your master!’ (he seconded the words with the analogous action, even at the portrait of the king, which was hanging there).

“*Italy and Liberty for ever!*” were his last words.”

During the time of this appalling narration I felt a pressure on my skull, as if a heavy iron were crushing it slowly, and cold drops of perspiration rolled from my brow down my face. Finally it seemed to me that I grew blind and deaf, and the vision of the six executed victims presented itself to my fancy with appalling vividness.

Oh, my fellow citizens, is there not one amongst you, who animated by holy love of country, would not raise a subscription to erect an unperishable monument in the square of Fieravecchia to those heroes!

I passed the whole night laboring under excitement. It was imperative, if I would escape death, that I should fly the country; there was not the remotest probability of saving my life if I remained—the sooner I fled the better—but I could not arrange any plan in my mind.

The morning came and I had not yet reached any conclusion respecting the steps necessary to be taken.

Signor Niccolo came from his morning rambles, and, with tears in his eyes, said to me:

“Woe on you, Mr. Balzani! A chief sbirro confided to me

\* A congregation of priests who are appointed to give the last comforts of religion to criminals. They wear a long black robe, with a red cross on the breast.



that they are searching for you throughout the city, under pretence of perquisition for arms. They have not gone to your house, first because they are sure that you are not there, and secondly in order to make you feel secure, and not keep yourself strictly concealed.

The city is already in a state of siege. Soldiers and cannon are placed at the gates, numerous bodies of soldiers patrol in and outside of the city, the *sbirri* are searching houses, police boats are crossing the bay continually, and stopping the passenger boats; close carriages are stopped and searched, and the citizens forbidden to collect in the streets.

“ You must fly, dear sir, to save your life, but I do not see any way or means to afford it.”

At this moment Luigi Monti came to see me. He knew my position, and I was so well aware of his character that I trusted to him though so young.

Amongst other matters he spoke to me of his determination to go to America.

“ Now that I do not see any hope for our country,” he said, with his usual bold frankness and easy manners. “ I will go back to the great country of freedom, where there are neither *sbirri* nor spies, and where a man with talent and character may make his fortune !”

These words were a flash of light to my mind, and of hope to my heart. I had thought several times of embarking in some vessel, but as I would have trusted my life only in the hands of an American captain, and as I knew nothing of the English language, I had discarded the idea. Now I hoped that through Monti, who could speak English, my going on board of an American vessel was the feasible and only plan of escape ; though it was fraught with many dangers, I resolutely addressed the young man :

“ Luigi, is there any hope that an American captain would hide me in his vessel, and take me to America or any other land where the Bourbons have no influence ?”



"Certainly," answered he, with pride, "the Americans are all lovers of freedom, and there is not one of them who would not feel proud of saving your life."

"Will you accompany me?"

"Yes!"

"Then," I said, with resolution, "this afternoon take an open carriage, and at half past twenty-three, (half an hour before dusk,) you must pass via Macqueda, before the lane. But beware! You must be exact to the minute, because I shall be there, and neither must the carriage wait for me nor I for it. Set your watch with mine and God speed you."

At this moment I felt my courage strengthened, and resolute to face any danger. I had formed a plan.

Addressing Signor Nicolo, I said:

"I must have a barber who is possessed of the following peculiarities:

"He must be a coward, a man who lives in the unfrequented parts of the city, and who in the time of the revolution remained in his shop; who afterward held no employment under our government, and had no occasion to apply to the administration. Have you such a man?"

Signor Nicolo placed his hand on his eyes and began to think. After a few minutes of musing he exclaimed:

"I have it! Just the man you want."

"Well, go then and fetch him here. Tell him that his service is required by a nephew of yours—a baron, or anything you like—from the country. Warn him that your relative is an odd and eccentric person, not bearing contradiction, and very generous. Manage these cautions so as not to raise in him any suspicion, and bring him here."

Signor Niccolo looked at me for a moment with a puzzled face, and departed without saying a word.

His wife and daughter showed, on this occasion, the Italian women's patriotism. They knew that if I were found there,



their husband and father's life would have been forfeited, and still they were anxious for me. Their faces, their eyes, all their movements spoke it to me plainly. In my life of exile, I have never forgotten those noble souled ladies!—The whole morning they alternately took their station on the balcony, reporting all *gend'armes*, *sbirri*, and suspicious looking individuals who passed the lane, and gave a scrutinising glance at the house. No one in the mansion touched food that day. In the afternoon Signor Niccolo came in with a well assumed mirthful countenance, bringing the barber with him.

This personage was a stout little fellow, with rosy cheeks, small nose, small blue eyes, and a small head covered with light, curly hair. He entered the room making a low bow at every step. At this moment a noise of loud knocking at the next door mingled with talking and oaths was heard. The lady who was watching at the balcony entered, with the pallor of death on her face, and could with effort utter, "It is the police at the next door!"

The barber, who was a talkative fellow, as those of the same trade generally are, chimed in, saying:

"Be not alarmed, ladies, they search for forbidden arms, if you have none be not afraid; they are harmless creatures, (making a wink with his eye.)

All the family made a circle around me as if they would protect me with their bodies.

Perceiving that their fear might betray me, in regard to the man who was present, I addressed him bluntly, and the following dialogue ensued:

Q.—"Well, fellow, who are you?" I asked, imitating the accent of our mountaineers.

A.—"I am Monsieur,\* sir—I mean your Excellency, and at your Excellency's service."

Q.—"Are you an expert Monsieur?"

\* Monsieur is the title by which barbers are called in Sicily.



A.—(raising the head proudly) “ I can shave without scratching the skin, cut the hair elegantly, make a toupee, arrange a wig, shampoo the head, bleed without failure, apply leeches cups, blisters, and poultices, extract teeth without pain,\* nurse a sick person, and above all I am one of the fashionable Monsieurs of the capital !”

Q.—“ Pshaw ! Capital ! You are proud of your capital. I am from Canicatti, and there the fashions come directly from Paris, before you know anything about it.”

A.—“ Perhaps it is so.”

Q.—“ It is !” (with violence.)

A.—“ Pardon, Excellency ; it is as you say.”

Q.—“ Well, tell me now the last fashion for the hair and beard ?”

A.—“ I confess that we are a little backward here ; your Excellency had better enlighten me about it.

Q.—(Triumphantly.) “ The most recent fashion is ; beard entirely shaven, and hair cut so as to leave it half an inch from the skin, but the skill is to cut it round perfectly equal—*a la condamné, a la condamné*, Monsieur ! Do you understand it ? It is a French expression !”

The barber looked at me with mouth and eyes wide open.

Q.—“ Ha ! ha ! You look astonished. Didn't I tell you that you knew nothing of recent fashions.”

The barber gave Signor Niccolo an enquiring look, and receiving from him one of assent, he said :

A.—“ Then you will have your hair dressed in this fashion, Excellency ?”

“ Undoubtedly !” was my answer.

A basin and towel were introduced ; the barber busied himself with extracting from his pockets scissors, comb, brush, and razors, and the operation commenced.

† All these branches are exercised by barbers.



These were terrible moments of suspense and fear for me. All this time the noise in the next house and the lane continued, and the whole family remained standing around me, looking at me with a blended expression of dread, surprise and sympathy on their countenances. I could plainly perceive the unwillingness with which the barber applied his razor or scissors to cut off my long black beard and hair, and the alternate shrugging of his shoulders said plainly—he is a fool.

“Give me a looking-glass,” I exclaimed, when the operation was at an end. He hesitated and pretended not to hear me. When at my second imperative demand Signor Nicolo said to him—“There, Monsieur, there is one on the bureau.” He took it, and with a trembling hand offered it to me.

I surveyed myself in the looking-glass, and to my astonishment and great content I could not recognize myself. The barber, who was looking at me at some distance, fearing that when I saw myself so monstrously transformed I would fly at him, seeing now the expression of joy that my face assumed, thought that I was satisfied with the work he had accomplished, and in a manner, half lively and half fearful, said :

“What do you think, eh?”

“Perfect!” I answered; “you had better come to live in Canicatti;” and at the same time I handed him half a dollar—a sum that he had never before gained in one day. The barber holding his left hand firmly on his mouth, extended his right, took the money, and went hurriedly down the stairs, where he gave vent to an excessive peal of laughter.

I felt relieved, when the necessity ceased of playing a part so contrary to my present feelings. The family at the same time rushed to my neck with tears in their eyes.

“Hold!” I exclaimed, trembling with emotion. “Do not unman me! The terrible moment approaches, and I have need of strength and courage!”

Knowing by experience that, even in a mask, people recog



nized me, by the expression of my eyes, I put on a pair of green spectacles, and a white cravat, and wrapped myself in my cloak. I had altogether the appearance of a priest from the country—a very odd figure. Still in that dreadful time, and in a country where the absence of foreigners renders all physiognomies familiar, the sight of such a curious and new aspect might have aroused suspicion, and once arrested, all disguise was useless.

I looked at my watch, and it wanted only four minutes of the appointed time. Two minutes were necessary to reach the corner of *via Macqueda*.

"The moment has arrived, my excellent friends," I said in a solemn tone of voice, "for us to part, and perhaps for ever!"

The ladies knelt before me, and with sobs and tears uttered, "Oh, bless, bless us, Mr. Balzani!"

Those words sounded in my heart as the last of a loving family to a dying parent, and animated by equal feelings, I said: "May the Almighty bless you, as I do with all my heart!"

A flood of tears flowed from their eyes; the bitter word—Farewell—was uttered, and I turned to the stairs, whilst loud, heart-felt prayers—"God be merciful and spare him," were made by the kneeling, sobbing and weeping family.

Signor Nicolo, without heeding his personal safety, accompanied me, to see me safely into the carriage.

Just as I reached the corner, the brave Luigi was passing in the conveyance, which was moving slowly. Without stopping it, I opened the door and jumped in, so quickly that it did not attract any one's attention.

Luigi Monti, who knew that his being found in my company would cost him his life as an accomplice, nobly volunteered to accompany me; but now that he was accomplishing his patriotic deed, seeing the *gend'armes*, *sbirri* and patrols at every



step looking inquisitively at every one, his young heart failed him, and with a face as pale as death he ordered the cabman to gallop.

Fortunately the man did not hear him, and I taking hold of his arm, whispered impressively in his ear:

"No, Luigi, if we run we are sure to be stopped. Go at a pleasant trot," I said to our man.

Still Luigi was agitated, and dread was written on his countenance in broad characters. This filled me with consternation.

I tried to make him converse, but he would not.

"Speak to me," I said, earnestly, "pretend to laugh; for, your countenance will betray us!"

"But how can I laugh," answered he, "if I do not feel like laughing?"

"Force yourself!"

"I have tried, but I cannot."

I resorted to the expedient of tickling him.

In this I succeeded, because he began to make, at every touch of my hand, such nervous grimaces, that people could take it for laughing, and I likewise seconded them with a nod of my head, or with a forced smile. In this manner we reached the gate *Porta Macqueda*, and when out of it, on the comparatively solitary road, I felt some relief.

"Where to?" asked the driver.

"To Santa Lucia."

This is a place on the sea-shore where row-boats are found which cross the bay to the Molo, where all the vessels are moored. On reaching that spot we alighted, waited until the driver had turned his horses' heads, so that he could not see our direction; then I hailed a boat, and jumping in, I said, "to the Molo."

Here we had another danger to avoid—the police boats.

"A beautiful day!" I said to our waterman



"It looks like summer," was his answer.

"Good business?"

"No, sir; thanks to those busy bodies of the police boats, who often stop us and ask our passengers, who they are, where from, where to, and several other nonsensical questions. Look, sir, there is one to our lee-way coming toward us."

I felt considerably alarmed, but as a man in danger is full of resources, I took a handful of water and sprinkled it on Luigi's face.

He had already regained his natural courage, and taking the hint imitated my action. At this I put down my spectacles and took off my cloak and coat, which my companion imitated, and we began a feigned struggle, with laughter and loud voices, as vulgar people do when on an excursion of pleasure.

Our scheme resulted according to my wishes. The police boat rowed near, but did not take the trouble to hail us.

Night had set in when we reached the Molo, and Monti, who understood the rigging of American vessels, said: "Here is our friend," and dismissing the boat we climbed on board.

I always contemplated an American vessel as the abode of happiness and freedom, and its sight produced in my mind the ideal of bravery and grandeur. Being now in a frame of mind analogous to my present position, that ideal grew gigantic. In touching the planks of sacred Liberty, a thrill of holy rapture and awe pervaded my whole being, and I felt secure from the clutches of tyranny.

The vessel was a brig named the Northman. Luigi asked for the captain, and the mate, Mr. George W. Closdam, answered the call, and said that the former was on shore.

Luigi mentioned that we were two men compromised in the struggle for freedom of the two previous days, and that we sought refuge under the American flag.

Mr. Closdam answered politely, that he could not take on himself the responsibility of keeping us, but that we could wait for the arrival of the captain.



Now my anxiety was immense. If I was refused asylum, my arrest was certain, for all around the molo were stationed *sbirri* for the purpose of hindering my taking ship, and they would have arrested me the very moment I put my foot on shore.

After a quarter of an hour of painful suspense for us, Mr. William Caulfield, the captain, arrived, and on hearing our business, promised us assistance, declaring that he felt himself fortunate to have the opportunity of saving men who were the victims of tyranny. At the same time he took the American flag, and exclaimed :

“ Under this have no fear ! I will defend with my blood a man who seeks protection under the American colors.”

Oh, what emotions were raised in my bosom by this pathetic scene ! And how deeply it struck my heart, by the comparison of what we had lost !

The brig was new, and the accommodations of the cabin were unfinished. Therefore a sail was spread on the floor where we lay for the night. Although this kind of bed was harder than the boards, and the cordage attached to it made it almost unbearable, the want of rest for two preceding nights, the mental excitement I had endured during the day, and the calm I felt in my present comparative safety, caused me to sleep as sound as if I were on a bed of down.

On the next morning, the 31st of January, 1850, the late Mr. Marston, then the American Consul in Palermo, came on board to see the refugees of whom Captain Caulfield had given him notice.

I was well known to him. As he warmly sympathized in our struggle for liberty, he had gone very often to the ministry, and had been received by me ; but now he did not recognize me, and I did not deem it necessary to make myself known.

The rash Luigi, trusting to his youth and to his being



unknown to the police, in the evening went on shore, and in company with the captain, took himself to Signor Nicolo's and gave him the news of our safety.

On the following day Signor Nicolo, heedless of his personal risk, came on board and related to me how the country people and the mountaineers were organizing a descent into the city, and that they begged of me not to leave the country.

On the 6th of February, my friend came and apprised me of my house having been invaded by the police, my property taken, my relatives and my housekeeper arrested, and of the latter having, under torture, denounced my brother Vincenzo and myself.

The terrorism in the city was tremendous ; still I clung to the hope that the country people were organizing, and that something could be done.

The North-man was ready to weigh anchor, and the captain recommended us to Mr. Daniel Baxter, captain of the bark Kensington, which lay alongside. A debt of imperishable gratitude binds my soul to the memory of this noble man. As an American, he did honor to his country ; and as a Mason he fulfilled his oath ! He did not use any warm expression on receiving us ; but his manners were so kind and unassuming, as if he thought the important service he rendered to us was an affair of no consequence !

He was the son of the captain who twenty years before had entertained my friends and me with a supper. Strange concatenation of human events ! The father presented me with a bible, the son sought to save my life !

The gathering of armed people on the mountains increased every day, and augmented in proportion the cruelties and vigilance of the government in the city, and the rigor of the search for my person. The watches of the *sbirri* had been doubled along the shore, so that no one could take the boat or go on board of a vessel who was not known by the police as having



some business there. This barred me entirely from going to join the mountaineers.

Signor Nicolo, sheltered by his unalterably calm physiognomy, and his being known to the *sbirri*, came every day, under pretence of selling some articles to the sailors.

On the evening of the tenth, the police came on an errand of humanity. They asked the captain if he had any stranger on board—for a young man had abandoned the paternal hearth, and they were seeking him to restore joy to a bereaved family. But Captain Baxter was not one to be so easily duped, and answered boldly, that he did not receive any such men on board his vessel.

On the twelfth, Signor Niccolo announced to me that in three days twelve thousand men from different places had agreed to convene on the outside of Palermo, and begin the attack, and that the chiefs expostulated against my leaving the country. In the afternoon Captain Baxter told Luigi that he was ready to depart, and that he would take one of us to America free of expense. Not knowing our position, he left the choice to ourselves, in order that he who was in the greater danger, might profit by his offer.

This raised in me a great struggle between the desire of self-preservation and love of country.

Looking from the window of my cabin I saw the *sbirri* on the watch, placed there to arrest me, if they could but have a glimpse.

The greatest difficulty in the way of saving my life was at that moment the want of money, for ten dollars was all that I possessed, and Captain Baxter had removed that cause of embarrassment by his generous offer. I was a fortunate man! But my mind ran at once from that position to the place where the men were gathering, and in fancy it seemed to me that I saw them ready to sacrifice their lives for the country, and heard them calling aloud for their leader. In a moment my



critical situation vanished from my sight, and my resolution was taken.

“Luigi,” I said abruptly, “did the captain tell you what he would do with the one of us who remains?”

“He said that another captain, a friend of his would take the other one.”

“Then you will depart and I remain.”

“Mr. Alfio, this will never do!” exclaimed Luigi, with his eyes reddened—poor Luigi, he loved me!—

“You have no money,” he continued, “and at all events I can go home with a little risk.”

“I thank you, Luigi, but my resolution is taken. It is certain that I risk my life; but it is for a good cause, and I trust that the same God who has brought me safely here, amid terrible dangers, will defend me throughout.”

In the evening I went on board the bark *Orleans St. John* of New Orleans, whose captain promised to Captain Baxter that he would keep me there for ten days and then take me to New York.

Luigi took leave of me, making me promise to send for him if I had success, otherwise we should meet in New York, and concluded with the words—“either free in our country, or free in America.”

The captain of the *Orleans St. John*, was a man of about five and forty. His name I have endeavored to forget in ten years of exile. He was rather tall and slim, with light complexion, small blue eyes, thin lips, long nose, and a bald head hidden by a red wig.

The very day that Captain Baxter sailed he assumed a stern demeanor, never looking in my face.

I felt lonely, isolated, and as a bereaved and helpless being, left among suspicious strangers.

Early on the following morning I was pacing to and fro, in the cabin, enveloped in my cloak. My mind was entirely



absorbed in meditating on my very precarious situation, whilst my eyes mechanically followed the manœuvres of the cabin boy, who was engaged in preparing breakfast.

He had set three places at table, as on the preceding day, one for the captain, one for the mate, and one for me, when the former made his appearance from his state room, and after glancing at the table, rushed like a fury on the boy, and applied a blow on his face which caused him to tumble down on the floor. The boy cried, and the captain, stamping his feet in a frantic manner, spoke passionately. I could not understand a word, but the haste with which the boy removed the third chair, plate, knife and fork from the table, explained the meaning of the disturbance.

Then the following dialogue ensued between the captain and myself, the boy serving as interpreter.

*Cap.*—"You must go on shore immediately, I will not give asylum to vagabonds."

*I.*—"Look around, sir. See those *sbirri* and soldiers. To land now is the same as to be taken and shot. As for vagabond, the captain who entrusted me to you assured you that I am in this predicament for having tried to serve my country."

*Cap.*—"Country!—freedom!—bah!—nonsense! You had better go, or I will give you up!" (with passion.)

These words horrified me. The sense of disgust that I felt for the man who stood before me, made me almost forget my imminent danger, and disregarding the consequences, I spoke thus:

"Sir, you gave Captain Baxter your word of honor that you would give me shelter, and, after ten days, take me to New York. I have always thought that unscrupulous men have the sense of shame to keep their words when no contrary interest opposes it, but to hear those words from you, from the mouth of a free born man, from the citizen of a great republic, whose freedom was purchased with the blood of their fathers, makes



my blood curdle ! When a fellow-citizen of Washington has said, that *he will give me up to the police*, I think it not worth while to live in this world any longer, and life itself becomes despicable to my eyes !”

As no man is perfect in this world, either in good or in evil, it seemed that my words awakened some dormant good qualities, for, with a visible struggle on his countenance, and foaming with anger, he said :

“ Well, I will give you this day and the following night ; to-morrow morning, if I find you here, I shall force you on shore.”

These words relieved me somewhat. But the respite lasted a single moment, for, on turning my head, I saw a gentleman standing at the door, looking at me, with his arms folded. He spoke to the captain a few minutes in English and then went away.

Who was that gentleman ? I did not know. He might be a Custom House, or a Sanitary officer, both dependents of the government, and sometimes spies ; and he had heard our dialogue ! This filled the cup of my consternation to the brim, and I retired into the cabin, giving myself up for lost.

Signor Niccolo did not come that day. When night began to cover the earth with her dark cloak, she found me alone and dejected, her shadowy wings serving to intensify the sense of my position, and deepen the gloom of the fate which awaited me. To land undetected was an impossibility, it only remained for me to face the approaching evil in all its hideousness.

At dawn, on the following day, I felt a hand holding my arm tightly and shaking it.

“ Who is it ?” I asked, starting up and gazing frantically at the man, who was none other than he who had heard my dialogue with the captain on the preceding day.

“ It is a friend,” he answered.

Recollecting my resolution of the preceding night, and believing the man to be an agent of the police, I composed myself to a calm demeanor, and quietly answered :



"I am ready to follow you, sir."

The gentleman who perceived that I was laboring under false impressions, replied :

"I come here to save you. My name is Giuseppe A., and my business that of purchasing for the American vessels. I heard everything yesterday and all the American captains in port are furious against this degenerate son of their country. There is my friend, Mr. James W. Hannum, captain of the brig Ottoman, who has volunteered to give you an asylum. But there are two little difficulties for you. The first is, that the Ottoman being freshly painted, you must remain here for two days longer. This captain has finally agreed to keep you here during that period. The other difficulty is, that Mr. Hannum not being the owner of the brig, he cannot take you to America without payment. But for this we shall have time enough to think. Be cheerful, sir, and trust to Providence!"

And in fact he was the god-send for me, and his conduct was so much the more noble, because if it were known he would have been shot or sent to the galleys.

I felt a relief, which far from looking for from any mortal, I had expected as a last resource at the hands of death. Still I could not trust the word of the bad captain, and begged of my guardian angel to come to see me during the two days that I had to remain in the power of that man.

It is hard for one who is used to a life of struggle and vitality, to find himself bound down by the iron chain of circumstances, without being able to move hand or foot, and watching one day after another the rising and the setting of the sun while he feels his blood stagnating in his veins, and the more so when he has not touched food for two days.

I spent that morning lying in my berth, with my mind grieved and my strength prostrated.

In the afternoon came Signor Giuseppe—my guardian angel—and on seeing me he exclaimed, with an alarmed voice :



“What is the matter with you?”

I could not induce myself to tell him that I was hungry. It seemed to me like begging, and though pressed by the instinct of self-preservation I could not utter the word. Finally, after his repeating the same question and *\*più che'l dolor potè il digiuno*, hunger carrying the victory in the struggle against pride, with a feeble voice I uttered:

“I am starving.”

“What!” exclaimed Signor A., “have you not eaten?”

“Not since the first day I came here,” I forced myself to reply.

With a Santo Diavolo in his mouth he turned away.

Fifteen minutes had not elapsed before he reappeared, carrying in the pockets of his overcoat a bottle of the best *Muscato* wine, some bread and some boiled eggs.

A little of the generous liquor that he poured into my mouth was sufficient to raise my strength, and I devoured the provision like a famishing wolf.

When he saw me restored, he said:

“Now I go. At midnight I shall be in a boat, dressed as an American sailor, waiting until the police boats start for their patrolling excursion. You must be ready, and at my signal come down noiselessly.”

Just after he was gone, the Genoese boy presented himself before me, with tears in his eyes, holding with both hands a biscuit. He could not find words, perhaps he was afraid of offending me, but he wept.

“*Che vuoi carino*—What do you want, my friend?” I asked.

“You must pardon me, signore,” he replied, timidly. “You have eaten nothing—nothing at all—for sixty hours! Accept this from a poor—Italian—boy! This is my—two—days’—savings.”

\* Dante—Inferno.



He pronounced these words interrupted by the throbbings of his heart.

My bosom heaved with emotion, and tears rose to my eyes.

“ My good boy,” I said, “ I am not hungry.”

At these words he burst into disconsolate weeping, saying :

“ I thought so—I thought so—I did not intend to offend you, signore—but you will die if you do not eat—the poor boy begs it of you—on his knees !”

I could not restrain myself any longer, and raising the boy from his humble posture I pressed him to my heart and covered his forehead with kisses ; then I said :

“ An honest man, my boy, never says an untruth. I have just eaten ; but to show you how dear is your action to my heart, I will eat the half of this biscuit before you, and on the other half I shall make a record of this kind act of yours, and I shall keep it as long as I live, to remind me of you, and of the first bread of mercy received for having loved my country.”

The boy looked ecstatic with joy all the time I was employed in eating the half biscuit.

“ Behold society in miniature !” I exclaimed, after he retired. “ How often the rich and the powerful have no heart to help suffering humanity, and the poor and the helpless grieve for their inefficiency to assist the sufferer !”

At the appointed hour I went safely on board the brig *Ottoman*, where I was received for the night by the mate, Mr. George S. Ray, who overwhelmed me with kindness.

As the brig was moored touching land, under the cannon of the fortress *Lanterna* and next to a Neapolitan man-of-war, I deemed it necessary to cut off every communication with my friends, and begged of Signor Giuseppe to tell the crew of the *Orleans St. John* that I had landed and gone to the mountains, in order that they might tell it to Signor Niccolo, or any one else who should come in search of me.



A few days passed over me secluded in my state-room, and watching, at a few yards distance, the *sbirri* who exercised every kind of vexation and wanton oppression toward the people going and coming on the shore, whilst the huge machine of war alongside, thickly manned with Neapolitan sailors and soldiers, presented itself to my sight as the emblem of the oppression of my beloved country. Oh, if they could know that their coveted prize were at such a short distance from them, only hidden by a partition of boards, what would have been their triumph!

Signor Giuseppe visited me every day. On the twenty-first of February, he related to me that a circular had been sent to all the authorities of the realm to apprehend the chief rebel and send him to Palermo with the solemnity used a century ago for the chief bandits.

After giving me this news, he remained silent.

"They are fools," I mused; "they do not comprehend that in this manner they would make a hero and a martyr of me, and so encourage hundreds of brave patriots to imitate my example; whilst if they let me alone, I should be, after the lapse of a few years, entirely forgotten by my countrymen. So it is with human nature!"

A second thought which arose in my mind was about the man who was in my presence. It ran thus: "This angel has hitherto saved my life, at the risk perhaps of his own. Still he does not know whose life he has saved, and, what is more admirable, he has not used the right of a protector to ask the name of the man he has preserved! This surrounds his action with grandeur. I must pay him with the same generosity!"

Governed by this thought, I addressed him:

"Signor Giuseppe, you have saved my life, and having no means of repaying you for your inestimable service, I will show my gratitude with a trust. You do not know my name!"

"I do not dare to ask it," said he.



"My name is Alfio Balzani."

At the sound of these two words the man seemed to me thunderstruck. His hair stood on end, his trembling lips stood apart, his eyes protruded. He looked at me for a few moments as if he could not give credit to his senses; then turned away from the cabin and disappeared without a single accent.

"What have I done!" I exclaimed, and remained the prey of thousands of misgivings.

But all my apprehensions went far astray from the line of conduct of that noble patriot. After the lapse of half an hour he returned, accompanied by Mr. Marston, the American Consul.

"Signor Balzani!" exclaimed the latter, "I did not know you on board the North-man; but now that your beard begins to grow, every one can recognize you. You must not remain here another day; you must fly the country. All the vessels have been searched by the police before their setting sail. Now the police have been apprised that you are sheltered on board of a vessel, but they do not know which one, and they sent me a communication that they intend to have a great search in all the vessels at anchor. Oh, you must fly to America!"

"But I have no means to pay my passage," I returned.

"This matters nothing," he replied. "There is the bark Rover in the middle of the Bay, which has been already searched, and is waiting for the morning wind to start. There you will go to-night. This is your last risk, because a police boat watches her. As for the payment, the captain is an excellent man, and, I am sure, he will content himself with half price—the other half will be forty dollars, and I will lend it to you."

After midnight I descended into a light American boat, where Signor Giuseppe was waiting in the costume of a sailor. With muffled oars we advanced noiselessly into the open Bay straining our eyes in trying to detect the police boats.



The night was intensely dark, and we had no fear of being seen at a distance ; but for the same reason we might find ourselves at a short distance from the enemy without being aware of it.

My heart beat violently for myself and for my preserver. Fortunately we approached the bark on the starboard whilst the police boat lay on the larboard side. So I climbed noiselessly to the quarter deck.

At dawn a message from the Consul reached the Captain, saying that the police had a suspicion that a boat had approached the Rover through the night, against orders, and that a new search was to be expected at every moment.

This threw Captain Horatio Nelson, the master of the vessel, into consternation. He approached me and said :

“ Here is a cabin full of boxes of oranges, make room so as to enable you to go into the midst of them at the first noise you hear on board.”

In fact, one hour after in my orange grove, I heard, with a palpitating heart, the usual noise of sabres, muskets and oaths.

Two hours after that, other passengers arrived, and the vessel started with a fair wind.

Safely I reached the land of freedom, where I have had to endure an ordeal of want and suffering, and where I have found amongst its children the most staunch, good-hearted and affectionate friends !

I conclude this work by expressing my unperishable gratitude towards Captain Horatio Nelson, and Mr. and Mrs Cobb, of Boston, my fellow-passengers, who all vied with each other in kindness towards me, and in using every resource to cheer my spirits, oppressed by the gloomy meditations on the afflicting position into which I had fallen.

T H E   E N D .

Nov. 15. 1861







# E R R A T A .

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## PAGE LINE

50	7	For them of,	read of them.
51	17	" is forbidden,	" are forbidden.
55	10	" aqui,	" ogni.
62	21	" Tilelfo,	" Filelfo Poliziano.
80	14	" Giubiano,	" Giuliano.
113	9	" and read,	" I read.
124	21	" Guiseppe,	" Giuseppe.
126	10	" "	" "
137	15	" know,	" knew.
140	16	" besides pistols,	" besides the pistols.
141	3	" are not,	" were not.
142	3	" at distance,	" at the distance.
143	28	" Signorina,	" Signora.
156	9	" will,	" wit.
170	2	" Guiseppe,	" Giuseppe.
170	13	" "	" "
171	2	" "	" "
183	1	" President L.,	" President T.
192	2	" Pelgrino,	" Pellegrino.
192	30	" dear son,	" dear soul.
206	17	" insised,	" insisted.
209	27	" There,	" Here.
216	2	" morning,	" evening.
229	34	" Law,	" few.
236	24	" marked physiognomy,	" marked Greek physiognomy.
351	15	" Aiyoa,	" Anjou.
423	14	" cou,	" con.
429	21	" Gesni.	" Gesù.
433	5	" cazta,	" carta.
451	23	" Vicery,	" Viceroy.
509	30	" placed,	" place.
510	17	" oversight,	" overseeing.
531	1	" ezociferi,	" crociferi.



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